



SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES & YOUTH

*The Doornbos family*

# 2024-25 Impact Report

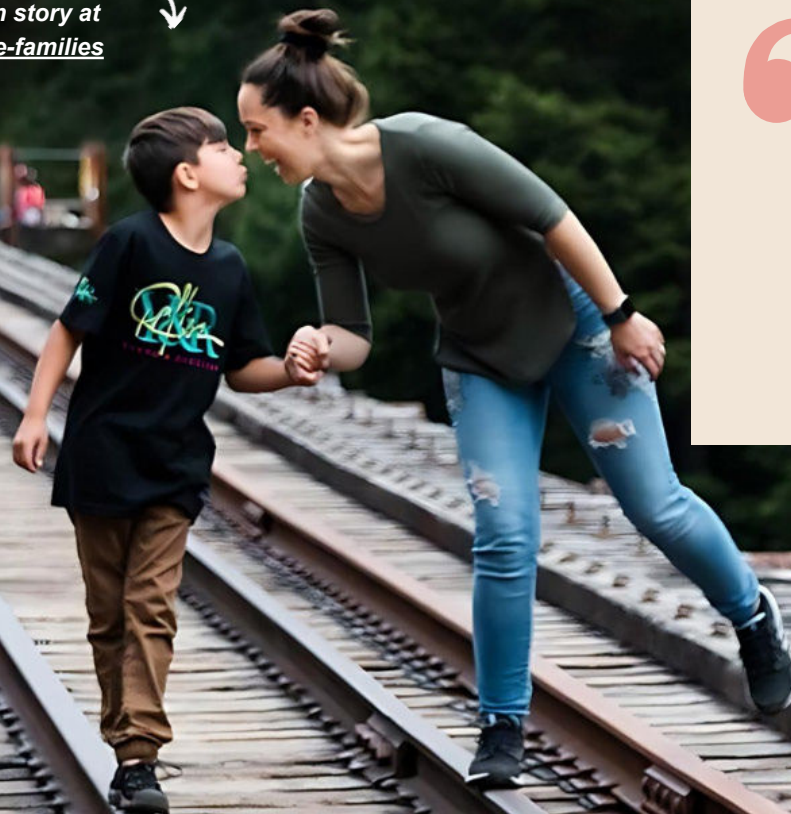




# Belonging for all.

*The Kendrick family*

*Learn more about their adoption story at [belongingnetwork.com/meet-the-families](https://belongingnetwork.com/meet-the-families)*



For almost 50 years, the Belonging Network has supported the adoption and permanency community in BC.

Today, we help find permanency for BC's waiting kids and provide support, learning, and connection for permanency families and youth from government care.

Our work is made possible by funders, partners, and community members who share the belief that every child and youth deserves love, stability, and a sense of belonging.

As Sakshi, a young adoptee, shared: "Belonging to me means being part of a world where you're not really left out. You actually have a place in this world."

**“Belonging to me means being part of a world where you’re not really left out. You actually have a place in this world.”**

# Dear friends,

It's been a year since we became the Belonging Network, and we're so pleased that our new name, brand, and website have been warmly received by our diverse and expanding community. Below are some highlights from our big year.

Adoptive families continue to come to us for support, learning, and connection, along with a growing number of other permanency families. BelongingNetwork.com had over 45,000 active users at March 31, 2025. Our Facebook groups, virtual coffee chats, and wide range of workshops are all well-attended, and our Face to Face Connections in-person events are proving popular in several locations. Individual coaching and complex case support requests are increasing.

**We're so pleased that our new name, brand, and website have been warmly received.**

In early 2025 we launched our new foundational education program, LEAP (Learning for Everyone in Adoption and Permanency), as well as its prerequisite Introduction to Adoption and Permanency. LEAP will be further refined based on the reviews of Indigenous and kinship caregivers, as we continue to develop our programs with all permanency families in mind.

Our Permanency Support Specialists continue to work tirelessly on behalf of BC's hardest-to-place children and youth. Their process begins with enlarging the circle of adults who have connection to a child. In one case, they grew the circle from five to 97 in three months!

Our AgedOut.com website for youth transitioning from government care to adulthood now has over 8,600 users. We added new content to help users navigate the

provincial government's expanded supports under the SAJE (Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment) program. Youth can now take a Quest to identify which benefits are suitable for them and create their own SAJE transition plan. We disbursed \$92,000 in bursaries to 29 amazing, ambitious students.

Our work with and for Indigenous people continues to grow. In addition to reviewing our existing programs through an Indigenous lens, we piloted our new Stepping Stones: Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Teaching life skills curriculum for youth with a number of communities. We also created family finding tools for Indigenous children and youth. We're looking forward to sharing both offerings widely in the year ahead.

We are enormously grateful to everyone who makes our work possible: the Ministry of Children and Family Development and other funders, individual donors, partners, fellow non-profits, contractors, consultants, volunteers, and our dedicated staff.

## Adrienne and Anne



Adrienne Murphy  
Board Chair



Anne Tower  
Executive Director

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## Strategic Advisor

- Cynthia Dyson



All photos are from our  
This is Belonging photo  
contest.



6,000+

**families, children, and youth served in the 2024-25 fiscal year.**



# Indigenous relations

We're here to support Indigenous families and communities in ways they say help most. Indigenous consultants, partners, and youth with lived experience help guide our work.

## For families:

Our new education program, LEAP, is being reviewed through an Indigenous lens to better support Indigenous families.

At the request of Indigenous partners, we created family finding tools to help connect Indigenous children and youth with families, community, and culture. We'll pilot these tools in 2025-26.

We also facilitate the Parenting Indigenous Children Facebook group, where nearly 150 caregivers connect for support and shared learning.

## For youth:

Three Indigenous youth from across BC sit on our Youth Advisory Committee, helping ensure our work reflects cultural and regional diversity.

With input from Indigenous consultants and youth, we created Stepping Stones: Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Teaching. This life skills program is now being piloted with partners like Pacheedaht First Nation, Kw'umut Lelum, and Fraser Valley Aboriginal Children and Family Services Society.

We shared this program at the Gathering Our Voices conference, where youth also took part in workshops and signed up for AgedOut.com — our website that supports young people transitioning out of care.

In partnership with Vancouver Film Studios, we awarded bursaries to four Indigenous students.

This journey is ongoing, and we are deeply grateful to walk with so many wise and committed partners.

*Special thanks to Indigenous Perspectives Society for their ongoing partnership and guidance.*



Photo credits:

1. The Franco Cea family  
2. The Kendrick family

3. The Levesque family  
4. The Loeffler family  
5. The Grayman family



# Waiting kids and youth

**“As long as they’re a loving and accepting family, that’s all I need.”**

— Waiting teen

Waiting children and youth count on us to help them find loving families. We do this by working directly with them, running the Adopt BC Kids info line, and offering information sessions and support for prospective families.

We’re excited to have launched Introduction to Adoption and Permanency — a free, self paced online course that walks people through the basics of adoption and permanency in BC. We also held special info sessions to encourage prospective parents to adopt older children and kids in the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. These children and youth often wait the longest for a family, and we’re working to change that.

Our Permanency Support team continued working closely with waiting kids to help them find legal permanency and build strong cultural and lifelong connections. In one case, they helped a young person with autism identify more than 90 new family connections. Now a caring family is getting ready to adopt them, and maybe their sibling too.

*The Pimentel family*  
Learn about their journey adopting siblings at [belongingnetwork.com/pimentel-family](https://belongingnetwork.com/pimentel-family)

# 2,600+

people visited our Adoption from foster care page

# 207

caring adults began their permanency journey by registering for our education program

# 138

completed the program, growing closer to forming their family

# 532

waiting parents connected through our Facebook group



# Where belonging begins

## *How our Permanency Support team helps children and youth*

Names have been changed

At the Belonging Network, we work with heart and determination to help waiting children and youth find loving, permanent homes.

Our Permanency Support team assists more than 60 children and youth each year, focusing on those who often wait the longest for permanency. This includes children with extra support needs, those in sibling groups, and teens.

**Our specialists take the time to understand each child's story and explore every possible path to permanency:** through birth family, cultural connections, meaningful adults from the child's life, and approved adoptive families.

They build strong relationships, visit regularly, support transitions, and stay in close contact with

everyone involved: Ministry of Children and Family Development social workers, the permanency family, foster caregivers, and the child. Behind every match are countless conversations, deep trust, and thoughtful care.

Often, legal permanency is achieved, but it isn't always possible. This can happen when a youth is close to turning 19 or doesn't want legal permanency. Even then, the specialists work hard to build meaningful relationships, and many youth still find people who become their family in every way that matters.

Julia's story is one example. She was 16 when she was referred to one of our Permanency Support Specialists. At the time, she was set on living independently after aging out of government care. Still, her specialist gently persisted, hoping to connect her with someone who could offer support and stability.

At a matching event, the specialist met a caring couple she believed could be a great fit. Although the couple was hoping to adopt a younger child, they were intrigued by this spirited teen. The specialist stayed in



touch, shared updates, and continued to pursue the idea.

After some time, the couple asked for more information about Julia. They knew she didn't want to be adopted, but were open to supporting her like a caring aunt and uncle. Julia agreed to meet them.

That first meeting grew into something more (though not without some ups and downs). By the time Julia aged out of care, she was spending holidays with the couple and celebrating important milestones with them.

Years later, they were at her wedding and at the hospital after she gave birth, and they continue to help care for her children. Today, they call each other mom and dad, daughter and granddaughter.

**They never became her legal family, but they became her family in every way that counts.**

Many wonderful children and teens are still waiting for families. **With your support, we can help them find permanency, belonging, and lifelong connections.**



# Permanency families

“Thank you for your kindness and for providing such helpful resources.

— Guardianship parent

We know that permanency doesn't end when a child or youth joins a family — it's a lifelong journey. That's why we offer personalized support, education, and opportunities to connect with others.

This past year, we launched LEAP (Learning for Everyone in Adoption and Permanency). It's a new education program designed to prepare all types of permanency families.

We offered more than 15 workshops and 50 support sessions. Topics included parenting teens and tweens, supporting sexual and gender diversity, and helping young people with FASD prepare for adulthood.

We also hosted two sessions of the Circle of Security Parenting Program and piloted our volunteer-led Face to Face Connections events. These gatherings gave families a chance to meet in person, share experiences, and build stronger support networks.

*The Bhatawadekar family*  
Read about their journey adopting from abroad at [belongingnetwork.com/bhatawadekar-family](https://belongingnetwork.com/bhatawadekar-family)

527

families reached out to ask questions or find support

320

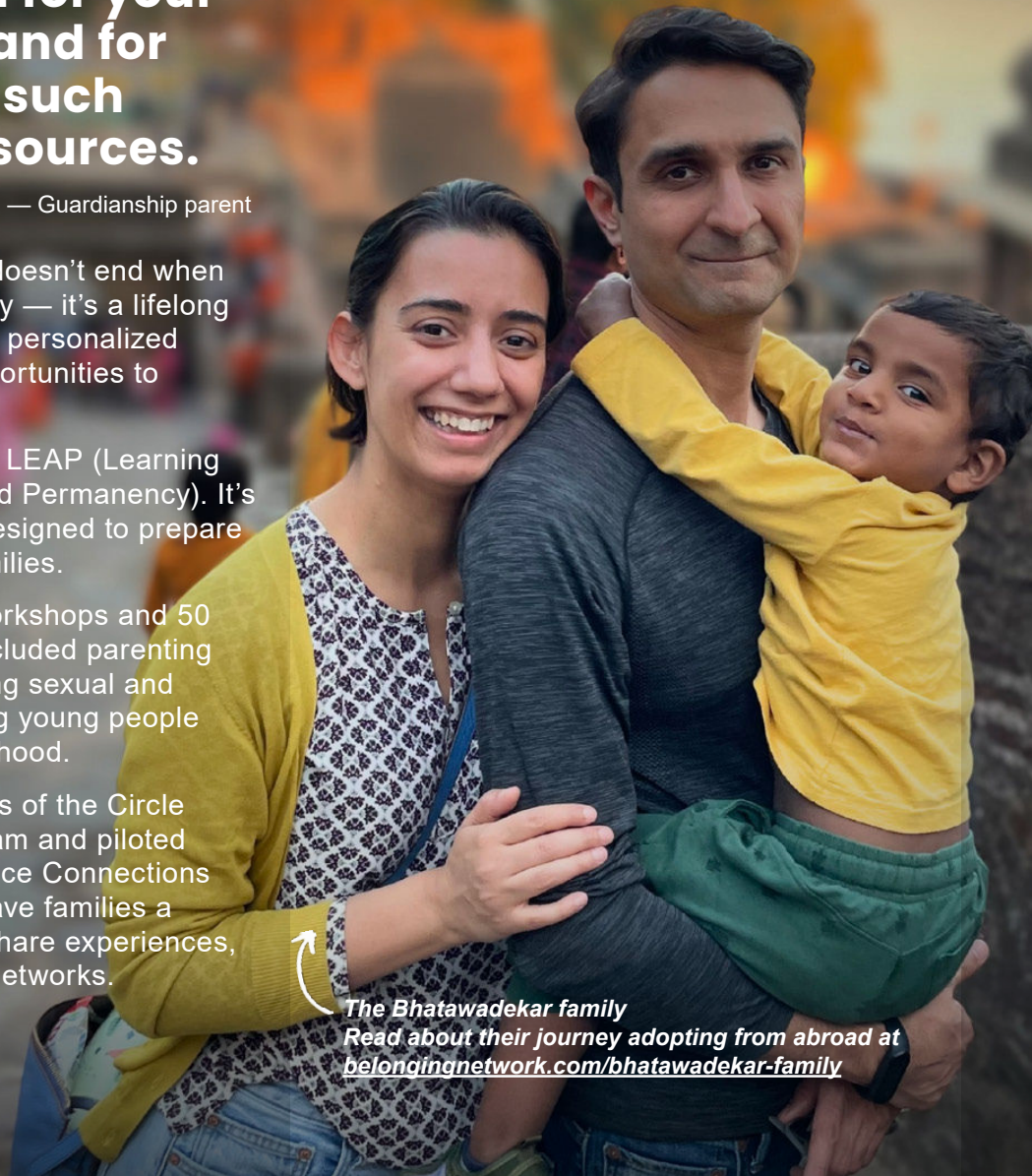
caregivers took part in our workshops to learn and grow

139

families gathered at Face to Face Connections events

474

permanency caregivers connected on our Facebook group





# A lifeline for families

## *How our Family Support team makes a difference for permanency families*

Everyone finding or raising a permanency family needs specialized support and connection.

There are times when parents or caregivers feel overwhelmed, alone, or simply need to talk to someone who understands. That's where our Family Support team comes in.

We offer free, confidential support to adoptive and permanency families across BC.

Whether they're facing a parenting challenge, stuck in paperwork, or feeling isolated, our team is here to help. We listen, offer guidance, and connect families with others in our community and with the resources they need.

One kinship caregiver had been raising her sister's son for years without legal rights or support. She was overwhelmed and unsure how to move forward. After

connecting with our Family Support Specialist, she received helpful information about legal options, referrals to kinship support services, and compassionate guidance on navigating family dynamics.

**"I was worried I wouldn't be able to support my nephew," she shared. "But the call gave me the clarity and confidence I needed. Thank you for your kindness and for providing such helpful resources."**

In addition to one-to-one support, our Family Support Specialists facilitate a variety of support groups designed to help families connect and feel supported. More than 50 sessions were held last fiscal year!

Our online support groups include:

- **Coffee Chat:** A weekly drop-in group for those parenting children or youth through adoption or permanency.
- **Waiting Parents group:** A monthly group for those preparing to welcome a child.
- **Facebook support groups:** Dedicated spaces for waiting parents, families with



complex needs, Indigenous children's caregivers, 2SLGBTQIA+ families, and more.

Here's a glimpse of their impact:

A family turned to our weekly Coffee Chat group while navigating the transition of welcoming a child into their home.

At one point, they felt ready to give up. But hearing from others going through similar experiences gave them strength, validation,

and new strategies.

**They now attend every week and say it's the most impactful support they've received.**

Our online community continues to grow, helping families feel less alone and better equipped to face the challenges of parenting through adoption or permanency.

We're here to make sure every family feels supported at every stage of their permanency journey.



# Youth in and from care

**“This goes a long way in ensuring I can successfully live and go to school.**

— 2024 bursary recipient

Youth leaving government care often face barriers. We're here to help them be informed and feel supported as they enter adulthood. We offer life skills programming, bursaries for post-secondary education, and an online resource hub with information and resources to support their transition into adulthood.

Last year, we renewed our Youth Advisory Committee. It now has 10 active members who guide our work.

We continue to improve AgedOut.com. The site now features five new info pages and a Quest to help youth learn about increased provincial supports. We are reviewing the site to ensure it's inclusive, and new resources are being created to help youth stay safe from gender-based violence and build healthy relationships.

To expand knowledge of AgedOut.com, staff have hosted seven virtual workshops for service providers and attended youth events such as Gathering Our Voices, Connect to Thrive, and TRRUST Collective Impact events.

**8,600+**  
registered users  
on **AGEDOUT.com**

**304**  
gift cards earned  
by youth with care  
experience

**2,500+**  
youth and allies  
connected on  
social media

**\$92,000**  
awarded in  
bursaries to 29  
promising students





# Backing bright futures

## How our bursaries help youth pursue their dreams

We see the strength, talent, and potential in every fostered and adopted young person. Our bursary programs are one way we show them we believe in what they can achieve.

Each year, thanks to the generosity of our donors, we help around 30 ambitious young people attend college, university, trades, or other training programs.

Last year, we granted \$92,000 in bursaries to 29 hardworking and determined students.

The bursaries help cover tuition, living costs, and the essentials they need to succeed.

We currently offer three bursary programs:

- **BC Orca Bursary Program:** For current and former youth in government care. In 2024, we awarded 24 bursaries.
- **Joy MacPhail Bursary:**

For one youth who joined their family through any form of permanency.

- **Vancouver Film Studios Indigenous Bursary:** For Indigenous people of all ages. In 2024, we awarded four bursaries.

**More than financial aid, these bursaries are a message to youth: you're seen, your future matters, and you're not alone.**

### Meet Nat

Nat is a law student, advocate, and one of the 2024 BC Orca Bursary program recipients.

He graduated with honours in History from UBC and is now in his third year at the Peter A. Allard School of Law.

At our 2024 Celebrate Belonging event, Nat spoke about the difference this support has made in his life and why it matters:

"As a recipient of the BC Orca Bursary, I'm able to focus on opportunities that benefit my career and health. The support from the Belonging Network helps students like me dedicate themselves to education and growth.

**It matters a lot that my worries nowadays are about my legal career, as opposed**



*From left to right: Board members Chris Roy, Merel Veldhuis, and Adrienne Murphy with bursary recipient Nat.*

### to whether I will have enough money to cover my necessities.

With the Belonging Network's support, I'm able to make the best choices for myself. I'm not forced to make trade-offs at my expense. This exemplifies the effect that generosity can have.

Without financial support throughout my education, I might not have been able to accomplish the same feats. I very well could be on a different path, even a tragic path.

The benefits I have received from support, such as the support from the BC Orca Bursary, have given me the freedom to choose my path and my struggles. I have been blessed with the freedom to forge a brighter future.

**Thank you all for making the world a much more positive place."**

Because of our generous donors, youth like Nat can dream bigger and go further.

To keep that support going, visit [belongingnetwork.com/donate](https://belongingnetwork.com/donate). Every dollar counts!



# We got here together

Last year, we came together to celebrate the launch of our new name and brand, and a renewed commitment to meeting the evolving needs of children, youth, and permanency families.

This celebration wasn't just about a fresh look. It was about deepening our purpose and honouring the community that fuels our work.

**Parents and caregivers** showed us the love and strength that define permanency families. Their lived experience helps us build better supports for others on the journey.

**Youth from care and bursary recipients** reminded us of their resilience and brilliance. Their stories and insights continue to guide and inspire us.

**Indigenous partners and consultants** are helping us walk the path of reconciliation. Their wisdom and relationships are essential to how we move forward, together.

**Funders and philanthropists** reminded us what kindness and generosity look like. Their belief in our work allows us to grow, adapt, and reach more families, children, and youth.

**Friends from other organizations** showed how collaboration makes us stronger. Their partnership helps improve our work and create better outcomes for the families we serve.

**Board members and staff** reminded us that it takes dedicated, passionate people to turn vision into action.

As we celebrated how far we've come, we also looked ahead. Our new name reflects a bigger vision: a future where every child in and from care and every permanency family has the support they need and feels connected and equipped to thrive.

Together, we've laid a strong foundation — and we're excited to keep building with you.

*Special thanks to our friends at TELUS for providing a beautiful space for our celebration!*



#### *Photo credits:*

1. Mandy D. and Shari M. from Fairness for Children Raised by Relatives; and Jane B. from Parent Support Services Society  
2. Everett W., Indigenous consultant; his wife, Kennedy; and Pat H., our programs director.  
3. Rose-Marie D., founding member of the

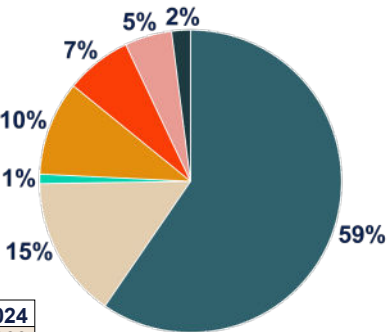
Adoptive Parents Association, and her husband, Ken; Anne T., our executive director; and Brianna BN., our communications manager.  
4. Ashley C., member of our Youth Advisory Council, and her friend.  
5. Anne T. and Board members: Chris R., Jennifer R., Adrienne M., and Kathleen L.



# Year-end financials

## Revenue

- Government service contract
- Projects
- Education and support
- Donations
- Child-specific recruitment
- Direct Access Gaming
- Other income

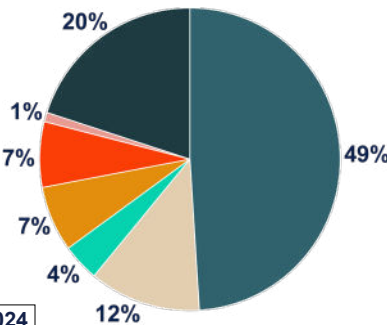


| FINANCIAL POSITION | 2025         | 2024         |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Assets             | \$ 3,305,758 | \$ 2,662,663 |
| Liabilities        | \$ 2,036,901 | \$ 1,334,780 |
| Restricted funds   | \$ 641,845   | \$ 714,917   |
| Unrestricted funds | \$ 627,012   | \$ 612,966   |

| REVENUE                     | 2025         | 2024         |
|-----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Government service contract | \$ 1,432,305 | \$ 1,266,061 |
| Projects                    | \$ 376,400   | \$ 711,141   |
| Education and support       | \$ 27,845    | \$ 34,385    |
| Donations                   | \$ 242,094   | \$ 258,724   |
| Child-specific recruitment  | \$ 170,000   | \$ 187,952   |
| Direct Access Gaming        | \$ 120,000   | \$ 120,000   |
| Other income                | \$ 59,928    | \$ 79,657    |
| Total                       | \$ 2,428,572 | \$ 2,657,920 |

## Expenses

- Provincial adoption support
- Projects
- Parent education and information
- Child-specific recruitment
- Youth programming
- Community awareness
- Fundraising and administration



| EXPENSES                         | 2025         | 2024         |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Provincial adoption support      | \$ 1,245,482 | \$ 1,070,203 |
| Projects                         | \$ 317,612   | \$ 643,810   |
| Parent education and information | \$ 105,388   | \$ 82,651    |
| Child-specific recruitment       | \$ 176,591   | \$ 185,591   |
| Youth programming                | \$ 171,812   | \$ 165,351   |
| Community awareness              | \$ 27,104    | \$ 29,619    |
| Subtotal                         | \$ 2,043,989 | \$ 2,177,225 |
| Administration                   | \$ 500,363   | \$ 519,980   |
| Total                            | \$ 2,544,352 | \$ 2,697,205 |



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gift of  
belonging

Donations  
make our work  
possible.

To make a gift, visit  
[belongingnetwork.com/donate](https://belongingnetwork.com/donate)



# Thank you

The Belonging Network would like to acknowledge all the individuals and organizations who gave financial gifts this past fiscal year. We are extremely grateful for your generosity and support.

A special thank you to our Board of Directors for their gifts of time, expertise, encouragement, and for their generous financial support. We are proud that every member of our Board is a donor.



The Morton family

## Legacy Partners (\$25,000+)

Adoption & Permanency  
Fund at Victoria  
Foundation  
Dave Thomas Foundation  
for Adoption  
May and Stanley Smith  
Charitable Trust  
Seedlings Foundation  
The Walsh Foundation

## Family Partners (\$10,000 - \$24,999)

Al Roadburg Foundation  
Diamond Foundation  
Mark Tower  
Vancouver Film  
Studios Ltd

## Neighbourhood Partners (\$500 - \$4,999)

Abundance Canada  
Adrienne M Murphy  
Amory Wong  
Anne M Tower  
Anonymous (2)  
Bob Armstrong  
Christopher Roy  
Face The World  
Foundation  
Hamber Foundation  
Harold Schellekens  
Jennifer Randall Nelson  
Merel Veldhuis  
Monica J Rogers  
Patrick Klassen  
Provincial Employees

## Community Services Fund

Roblox  
Serena's Pizzeria  
Shane Sauer  
Toast.org  
Trisha M Gagnon

## Community Partners (\$200 - \$499)

Amur Financial Group  
Daniel Logan  
Gordon Richter  
Jasbant McGarvie  
Jennifer Rajala  
Jimmy Bejar  
Kali Gehringer  
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Kim Boivin-Sonolet

Mark & Tania Bailey  
Michelle Wootton  
Tina Fischer  
Treena Innes

## Spirit Partners (\$100 - \$199)

Alexandra Kruthaup-  
Harper  
Brianna Brash-Nyberg  
Helen Lamb  
Maria Angela Muhr  
Mary Francisco  
Mona Brash  
Nadjy Nackna  
Salesforce  
Sophia Tanaka  
Tracey Boulton

## BC Orca Bursary Program

Golf for Good 2024  
Linde Equity  
Louis Family Foundation  
Peggy Howard  
Peter & Joanne Brown  
Foundation  
Randall Foundation  
TELUS

*Special thank you to  
Tracey McVicar for her  
ongoing support for  
the BC Orca Bursary  
Program.*

*We have done our  
best to recognize  
donors who made a  
contribution between  
April 1, 2024, and  
March 31, 2025.  
We apologize for any  
errors and invite you  
to contact us with  
corrections at  
[info@belongingnetwork.com](mailto:info@belongingnetwork.com).*



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Province of British Columbia





*The Altizer family*

**belonging  
network**

SUPPORT FOR FAMILIES & YOUTH

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Families Association of BC

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