



West Side  
Family Place

# 2021-2022 Annual Report

Supporting families to raise happy and healthy children since 1973.

*West Side Family Place is located on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh peoples.*

## President's Message

It is truly hard to believe a year has passed and that I am writing this last message as the President of the Board of Directors at West Side Family Place. It has been six years since I joined the Board at WSFP. I have seen the organisation shift operations to face the challenging times of the pandemic and find new approaches to support our community.

When I joined the Board in 2016, I was amazed at the richness and diversity of programs and services provided and the incredible strength and resilience among our staff, participants, volunteers, and community members. WSFP is a unique family resource centre like no other and although times change, the values have always remained the same: to help families raise happy, healthy children and ensuring parents and caregivers do not feel alone while doing so.

We thank those members who have moved on from WSFP after their invaluable contributions to the Board, and have welcomed passionate, dedicated new members. My warmest thanks are also extended to all my colleagues on the Board. I know they will continue to work to ensure that WSFP thrives well into the future. This wider family has given great support to my immediate family which I love so dearly.

Last year the Board approved a plan to renovate our basement playroom welcoming families back to indoor programming post-pandemic. We also modernised our website allowing for online registration to programming as well as enhancing user-experience.

We're pleased to announce we are now a living wage employer, and we continue to reconnect with the neighbourhood with the help of our community partners.

Next year we celebrate our 50th anniversary, which will be a wonderful opportunity to reflect on our history and celebrate individuals who have made a huge impact in our communities over the last 5 decades.

These past couple of years have no doubt been the most challenging for everyone at West Side Family Place and in the community we serve. Under the great strain of the pandemic, our staff have shone, facing every challenge to help vulnerable families. I am in awe of our team of staff - Eva, Sue Ellen, Maria and Salena and grateful for the expertise, commitment, and heart they bring to their work. Also my sincerest gratitude to our Executive Director, Diane Elliot-Buckley for her leadership and for the supportive working relationship we've shared over the past few years. WSFP is fortunate to have such a dedicated leader.

Finally, I'd like to express my appreciation and send the very best wishes to all the community members, funders, donors, and friends. You have made WSFP what it is today. Thank you for making a difference to our community and I wish everyone the best of luck and look forward to following more WSFP successes.



**MITAL GORMAN**

*President*

# Executive Director's Message

On behalf of West Side Family Place, I am pleased to present the 2021/2022 Annual Report. As we complete the second full year of the Covid-19 pandemic we reflect on what we have learned about the needs of families, and about our resilience as an organization and as a community.

Throughout the year we continued to innovate in response to the pandemic to be present in people's lives in impactful ways. We did this with support and direction from our Board of Directors; commitment and creativity of staff; assistance from our community partners and understanding and flexibility of our funders. But ultimately, it was you – our members – who filled the space and created community. Thank you for trusting us.

For most of the 2020 – 2021 year our programs were either virtual or outdoors. This allowed us to ensure a safe environment for our participants, but also provided time to give our playroom a much-needed upgrade. In January we welcomed families back into a bright, new space. Thank you to the City of Vancouver for the financial assistance for this project.

Thank you to Sue Ellen, Salena, Eva, and Maria. No matter the circumstances, this group of exceptional individuals uses creativity and compassion to provide a safe and welcoming space for our families. The dedication of the WSFP team has allowed us to achieve our vision of providing an inclusive environment that nurtures, supports and strengthens families, and builds community.

Whether through Play and Learn, Nobody's Perfect Parenting, or our group field trips, the love and commitment of our staff was extraordinary.

I am grateful for the support and guidance of the WSFP Board of Directors who bring such dedication to the work. I would like to thank our outgoing Chair Mital Gorman and for six productive years of energetic leadership. We wish Mital all the best in her future endeavours and appreciate the many ways she shared her gifts and made us stronger. This year we also say goodbye to Jeff, Amrit and Merryn. Thank you both for your commitment to WSFP. Thank you also to Christine, Carolin, Susan and Christina for your commitment to the organization.

We appreciate the ongoing support of our funders, including the Ministry of Children and Family Development, BC Community Gaming, the City of Vancouver and Vancouver Coastal Health. It is through these partnerships that we are able to provide a supportive community that families need to thrive.

Thank you for being part of the Family Place community. It has been a pleasure and an honour to walk alongside you through these challenging times. I hope that Family Place has helped make life seem a little more normal and a little bit kinder.



**DIANE ELLIOT-BUCKLEY**

*Executive Director*

# Highlights from 2021/22

Welcomed more than 4503 parent/child visits throughout the year



Increased our Play and Learn program to six sessions per week and brought back the very popular indoor sessions in January



Enjoyed a fantastic holiday event for families at the Hollywood theatre in partnership with the Kits on Broadway Business Improvement Area



Facilitated the Kits in the Park program at Arbutus Greenway and Tatlow Park through the summer months, in partnership with Kitsilano Neighbourhood House

Gave our playroom some much-needed love with new floors, new lighting, and lots of updated storage space

# Highlights from 2021/22



Took time to reflect, engage families in conversation and share learning on Pink Shirt Day, National Day for Truth and Reconciliation and Indigenous People's Day

In October Vancouver Mayor Kennedy Stewart and Council proclaimed Family Place Week and we received a visit from Councillors Christine Boyle and Rebecca Bligh

Explored other beliefs and cultures in celebration of Diwali, Hanukah, St. Lucia's Day and Lunar New Year



Partnered with the Dalai Lama Centre to offer the "Life Skills for Families" workshop series, which presents a vision of mindful and purposeful parenting



Participated in the Feelings First campaign created by the BC Healthy Child Development Alliance to introduce important concepts around Social and Emotional Development in the early years

During our Family Field Trips, we moved, explored, paused, and just simply enjoyed connecting with nature and our friends!

# What Our Members Say



“

*Absolutely loved it! Couldn't have coped as well through the pandemic with outdoor play each week and the chance to chat to staff about general parenting and feelings.*



“

*Thank you so much for making a positive impact in our lives! It really made a big difference.*

“

*It was great to have a safe space for the kids to use without worrying about overwhelming numbers of people.*



“

*This was the BEST! It was basically the only program I was comfortable going to with my child. She got to be with other kids even during the pandemic, we got to see other families, and we were always greeted by sunny faces and kind words from staff. THANK YOU!*



“

*For the first time since my 2 year old learned to walk, I could engage with somebody outside and didn't have to panic when he was out of sight for a few seconds as I knew that everything was secure. Circle time was also very enjoyable, and I'm impressed that they managed to keep my toddler engaged the whole time.*

“

*Amazing! We love outdoor play. Also, for him to interact with other kids and for me to meet other parents and Family Place wonderful staff every week. We came regularly and it was one of our only ongoing activities. I also liked the small groups and I felt I got to know more people that way. I met many of the same families over and over again.*



# Our Funders



City of Vancouver



Vancouver Coastal Health Authority



BC Gaming



Ministry of Children and Family Development



Employment and Social Development Canada



Vancouver Foundation

# Our Caring Community

West Side Family Place gratefully acknowledges the support of:



Vancity Kitsilano Branch



Intact Insurance



Spencer Creo Foundation



Brian Cook - Children's Music Performer



Gail Yee, Dental Hygienist - Vancouver Coastal Health



Rosa Kassen - Plume Sleep Solutions



Kitsilano Neighbourhood House



Nicole Kapphahn - Vancouver Public Library, Kitsilano Branch



The Dalai Lama Centre for Peace and Education



Kids on Wheels



Kits on Broadway Business Improvement Association



Babies for Climate Action

## Board of Directors

**Mital Gorman**  
Chair

**Susan Rae**  
Director

**Jeff Lee**  
Treasurer

**Amrit Nagra**  
Director

**Christine Martin**  
Privacy and Personnel Officer

**Merryn Singer**  
Director

**Carolyn Picker**  
Secretary

**Christina Dhami**  
Director

**Brooke Astles**  
Director

## Staff

**Diane Elliott-Buckley**  
Executive Director

**Eva Svensson**  
Family Support Coordinator

**Sue Ellen Elman**  
Playroom Coordinator

**Maria Cheung**  
Playroom Coordinator

**Salena Wong**  
Office Administrator



## Celebrate with us!

In 2023 we will celebrate fifty years in the community. We are proud of our rich history and look forward to finding new ways of supporting families in the future. If you would like to be a part of our celebration, either through volunteering, sponsoring or donating, please reach out - I would love to hear from you.

# West Side Family Place



# ANNIVERSARY

*"We are all social species which means relationships are everything, especially for parents and kids. In our fast-paced modern world, many families feel like they are navigating the journey of parenthood and child-raising in isolation. Family Places change all of that. By providing a safe landing space for parents and children alike, Family Places ensure that kids ultimately get the best possible shot at this thing called life. Family Places are the birthplace of new friendships, restored confidence, and collaborative support. They are wonderfully rich - and essential - part of showing up as a community."*

*Dr. Vanessa LaPointe, Author and Speaker*



# West Side Family Place

2819 West 11th Avenue  
Vancouver BC, V6K 2M2  
604-738-2819  
wsfp@telus.net  
www.westsidfamilyplace.com

Your donation can help keep West Side Family Place affordable and accessible for all. Thank you for your support!

