



# ANNUAL REPORT

## 2021



OAKLANDS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

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# INTRODUCTION

Oaklands Community Association is currently one of twelve neighbourhood associations in the City of Victoria. A Board of Directors was inaugurated for the Oaklands neighbourhood in March of 1995 and the OCA was legally established as a non-profit society the following September. Construction on the Oaklands Community Centre (OCC), adjacent to Oaklands Elementary School, began in April 1999 and was officially opened January 15, 2000. The Centre features two large multi-use rooms that can be used separately or combined to hold up to 150 people. The Community Centre is regularly used for our Out-of-School programs, children's camps, and a variety of recreation programs and social events. In June 2010, OCA purchased the Oaklands Neighbourhood House (ONH) property at 2629 Victor Street and opened the Little Acorn Daycare in the fall of that year. ONH features two rooms with a partition for a third room, a kitchen, and a backyard playscape. This facility is licensed to run two childcare programs with a combined capacity of 43 children. As a major employer within the neighbourhood, Oaklands Community Association has approximately 14 full-time and 57 part-time employees as well as a number of contract instructors and over 100 volunteers.

# ED'S REPORT

Dear Oaklands Community,

Another Covid-19 pandemic year is in the books – and we made it (insert deep breath here)!

On behalf of the team at Oaklands Community Association, I would like to thank everyone for their ongoing support and patience as we navigated our way through another year of constant change.

The global pandemic continued to affect operations in 2021 and still does to this day. We found ourselves planning, pivoting, and perpetually adjusting policy as rules and regulations changed with the transmission and variants of Covid –19.

I cannot over state the incredible work that was done by the entire OCA childcare team in 2021. I tip my hat to the staff at Little Acorn. Under Amy Truswell's direction, our daycare was able to continue to offer uninterrupted service to our families and provide them with the level of care that they have come to expect from this program. Cindy Allen and the Out-of-School care team worked carefully to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for kids to play in, before and after school. All this despite working the frontlines during very unsettling times.

The ever-changing Covid landscape hit the fitness and recreation field hard. Like many other providers, many of our classes were stalled or moved online. Others we reintroduced when it was safe to do so and have now started allowing drop-in classes again. With limited numbers, we were able to open our doors to facility rentals again, something we were unable to do virtually all of 2020.

We saw the demand for food security programs grow out of necessity in 2021 and the Community Development team was quick to step up to the challenge. We partnered with Mustard Seed, Gift of Good Food, South Island Farm Hub, Food Share Network and Second Harvest to help us feed the community. With the help of our fabulous volunteers, we were able to



accommodate 4267 individual visits to our Oaklands Pantry in 2021.

We kicked off the year by introducing a school snack program called “Munchie Cart.” From Monday-Friday during the school year, OCA wheeled a cart of nutritious snacks to Oaklands Elementary to prevent children from going hungry. The cart is strategically placed in the hallway next to the school’s front office, where kids can anonymously help themselves to a snack without feeling embarrassed. In September, we expanded the Munchie Cart program to include our neighbours at the Victoria School for Ideal Education. A very heart felt thank you goes out to our dedicated volunteers who are the driving force behind the delivery of our food security programs.

Thinking about our Sunset Markets puts a smile on my face. Simply put, the series was one of our biggest accomplishments in 2021. With the support of staff and volunteers we were able to bring the community back together in an outdoor, safe and family friendly setting after more than a year of stringent restrictions. From June 30th – September 1, 2021, Wednesday evenings at OCA were a celebration. The grounds were transformed into a farmers and crafts marketplace. We averaged 40 vendors, 4 food trucks and local entertainment every week. This was a welcomed event for the community to gather safely while purchasing their weekly fresh produce and enjoying a meal out while supporting local farmers, artists, and food truck vendors.

The success of the Sunset Market and easing of Covid-19 restrictions allowed us to revitalize our indoor Winter Market in mid-November. Another success as folks walked around sipping hot apple cider, supporting local vendors, and doing their holiday shopping.

During the summer months we were also able to break ground on our much-anticipated community garden project at Oswald Park. This was an initiative that was 3 years in the making, and it was wonderful to see the hard work of the Parks Committee moving along. All the plots were spoken for before we officially launched the garden opening in 2022.

By now, we all expect Covid-19 to be with us for the foreseeable future. Still, we have many reasons to be optimistic about what lies ahead. With the guidance of the Board of Directors, staff and community input, OCA has a new strategic plan and a vision for the next 3 years. We stay true to our commitment to expand our childcare spaces and continue to explore new ways to engage and support our community.

To keep up to date on all things OCA, I invite you to up for our monthly newsletter at <https://oaklands.life/oaklands-e-news>. I also encourage you to reach out to me directly at [ed@oaklandsca.com](mailto:ed@oaklandsca.com).

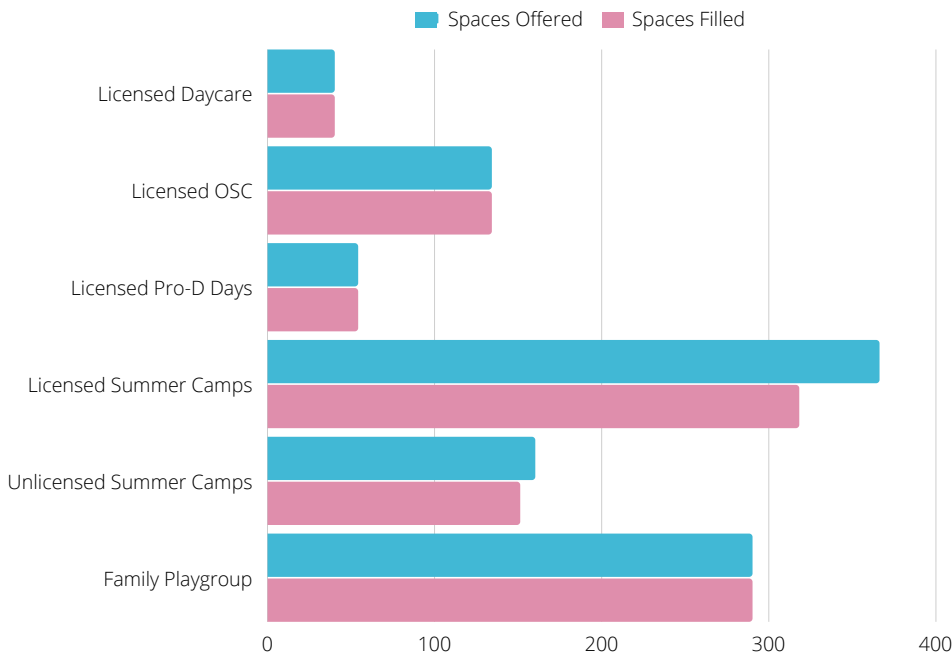
I look forward to seeing everyone at the 2022 installment of the Sunset Markets.

Best,

Mira Laurence

## CHILDCARE, OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE, & FAMILY PROGRAMS

Overview of 2021



Oaklands Out-of-School Care and Little Acorns Daycare continued to operate at capacity with both programs having wait lists. OCA worked closely with SD61 to finalize agreements to operate two new learning facilities at Hamilton Park that will allow for Infant and toddler care, preschool and another 24 before and after school care spots. When PHO orders allowed, we were able to offer our extremely popular Playgroup, which provided families an opportunity to socialize with other new parents and caregivers, while the little ones played and sang songs.

### Family Playgroup

We were able to continue offering our Tiny Tykes program amidst the ever-changing mandates due to the pandemic. The program changed to a registered program with reduced numbers, individualized craft materials for each child, and extra cleaning of toys and surfaces. We had to suspend offering snack during this time; however, families were happy to have a safe place to gather, expressing the importance of socialization for their children. Tiny Tykes continues to have a good reputation for providing a quality program to the families in the community.





## LITTLE ACORN DAYCARE

2021 and Covid, combined with ever-changing mandates, made for a rollercoaster year but Little Acorn was back at full capacity in January. Despite illness, lack of qualified applicants and managing staff retention due to burn-out, the program continued to provide quality care for families. We were very happy to be able to reintroduce physical literacy and yoga that were sorely missed in the previous year. The OCA is thankful to the staff of Little Acorn for their resiliency and thankful for the patience and understanding families as we navigated this past year.

“

*Having a new Executive Director start in January 2021 was a big highlight for me as she has been such a supportive and hands on leader. I continued on with getting the learning studios ready and all the paper work and licensing correspondence that goes with it. I think 2021 was a cautious year for us as we were all still dealing with COVID and the effect that it was having on everyone's mental health. I tried to focus my time and energy on supporting staff and found myself in program quite a bit to help out with staff being away sick. I do think of 2021 as a success because we managed to stay open at full capacity and have some of our extra programs running.*

*Amy Truswell, Childcare Coordinator*

”



## OUT-OF-SCHOOL CARE

The Out-of-School Care (OSC) Program continued to provide a fun and inclusive environment for school-aged children. While we maintained all OSC sites at the OCA and Oaklands Bible Chapel, we did move the Victor School OSC program to the recently recovered Sundance Elementary School. This move allowed us to provide OSC to the children of not only Sundance and Willows Elementary, but also children from Oaklands school, reducing our wait list numbers.

We expanded our coordinator team with the addition of a Camps and Activities Coordinator position, who organized all camps and re-introduced to our programs added-value activities including yoga and swimming. This position was also responsible for overseeing our awesome summer camps, in which we launched a new unlicensed outdoor camp successfully.

We also continued to provide practicum students a place to learn. We supported 6 students from either the Child and Youth Care program through the University of Victoria, or the Community, Family and Child Studies diploma program from Camosun College. We were super pleased to have 3 of those students remain as staff after their practicum placement.



*"I have been employed with OCA for 2 years and have thoroughly enjoyed my time here. I have been able to better develop my skills when working with children, and I have had the opportunity to explore other programs that OCA has to offer. The management and staff are incredibly welcoming, supportive, and caring towards employees and people accessing services."*

*Angela E. , OSC Room Lead*



# RECREATION PROGRAMS

Despite the challenges of operating during the pandemic, OCA was able to continue to offer a wide variety of fitness and recreation classes for participants of all ages, from newborn to 99. Many of the exercise programs were offered over Zoom or physically distanced in person classes. Some programs were a combination of both.

The OCA, along with many other recreational facilities, fitness studios and community centres managed to navigate successfully through a year of uncertainty. With short term closures, capacity limitations, and vaccine mandates, the OCA was able to continue in providing affordable and quality programming. Rentals also generated revenue after a long hiatus, offering a place for people to celebrate again.

## Wild About Nature 2021



### Overview of 2021 - OCA Facility Rental



24 Rentals in total



796 people attending

# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## FOOD SERVICES

### Oaklands Pantry

- Weekly free food market of fresh produce, canned, dry and frozen goods, with over **4000 household** members uses during the year .
- Partners: Food Share Network, Red Cedar Café, South Island Farm Hub, Mustard Seed, Society of Saint Vincent de Paul.
- Funded through: Second Harvest, Telus Community Grants, FarmBucks, Feed a Family Fundraiser
- Volunteer hours: 340

### Munchie Cart

- Started in January 2021, a partnership with Oaklands Elementary, PAC, and later in September 2021, Victoria School for Ideal Education to provide accessible, healthy snacks to children in need in our community.
- Served up to **5000 snacks to children** in need over the year
- Funded through: City of Victoria Strategic Plan Grant
- Volunteer hours: 220

### Food Hampers

- 12 weeks of Food Hampers delivered to seniors, a total of **456 hampers**.
- Transitioned to Oaklands Pantry in spring 2021.

### Gift of Good Food

- 19 households provided bi-weekly free Good Food boxes for the year - total of **1656 household member uses**, with delivery to seniors with accessibility needs.

### BC Farmers Market Nutrition Coupons

- **28 seniors** provided with coupons for free produce and meat at BC Farmers Markets



# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## GARDENING

### Oswald Park Community Garden

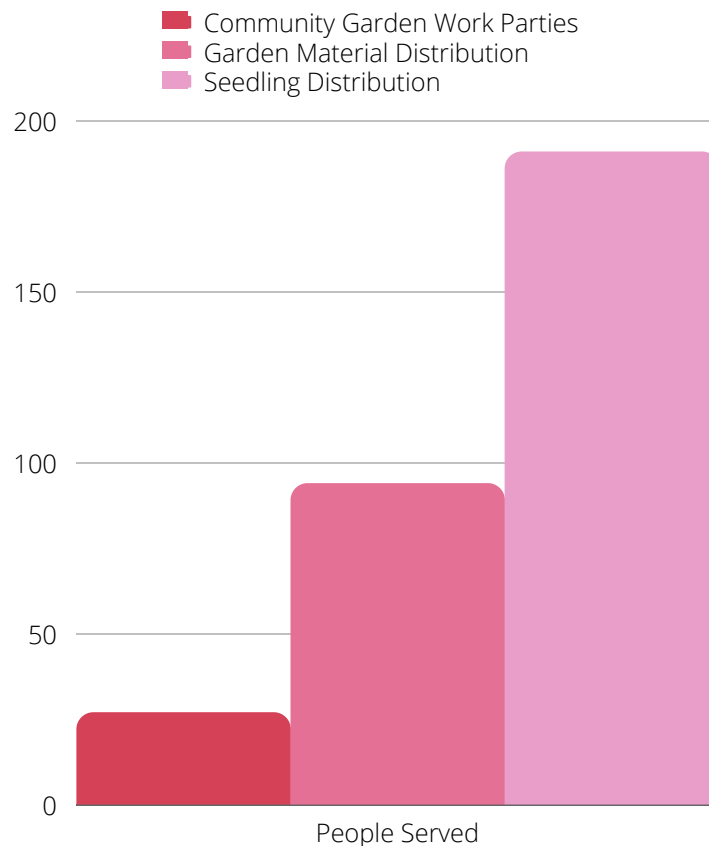
- 24 individual plot holders, 2 non-profit plots (Kiwanis Pavillion, Victoria Womens' Transition House).
- Garden construction started in August 2021.
- Garden applications opened September 2021, and it filled up in one week.
- Hosted 2 work parties in 2021 (moving garden materials).

### Garden Materials Distribution

- Distributed Mulch and Compost as a Neighborhood Partner with the City of Victoria's Get Growing program on April 16, 2021

### Seedling Distribution

- Distributed 1,594 plants in the Summer Seedling Distribution. Distributed soil, leaf mulch, and compost twice.





# COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

## EVENTS

### Oaklands Sunset Market

- 10 Wednesday markets offered during the summer, with over 7000 community members in attendance 85 local vendors (craft, farmers, art, prepared food)
- 13 volunteers at each market
- Live music performances by local artists
- Open Mic to show off neighbourhood talent
- Partnered with the BC Farmers' Market Association and participated in the Nutrition Coupon Program to support food insecure community members (distributed roughly \$5,000 worth of coupons toward fresh produce, meat, eggs, and seedlings)

### West Coast Winter Market

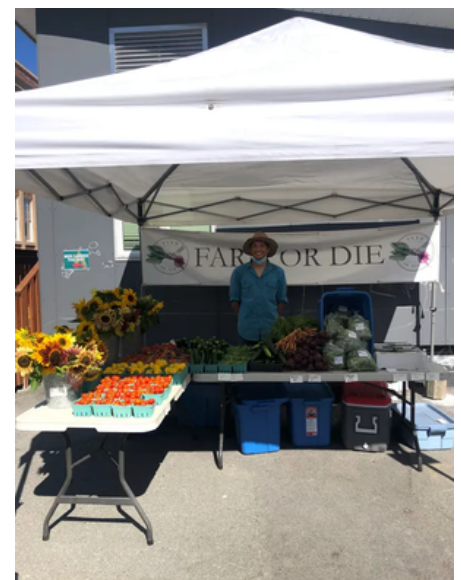
- Holiday market of local crafts and makers, with about 800 community members in attendance \$ Funds raised towards new childcare facilities

### Seniors Christmas Dinner

- Holiday dinner, with door prizes and live music for 17 seniors.

### Community Dinner

- 8 community dinners, with a total of 290 community members attending or picking up a by-donation takeout meal
- Volunteer Hours: 70



## COMMUNITY BUILDING



### Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- JEDI working group created after Intercultural Competence staff workshop in October, 2021 to integrate the outcomes of the workshop (suggestions, questions and hopes from staff) into the programs and working environment of OCA.
- November 2021, two part-time three-month positions created with Canada Summer Jobs funding: Community and Social Services Worker, and JEDI Events Coordinator.
- Began work on JEDI needs assessment of community and staff, compiling JEDI resources for community and staff, inclusion and cultural events planning, assisting with funding applications, collaborating with departments through the JEDI Working Group.

### My Great Neighbourhood Grants

- Supported community members in securing funding for two block parties and a neighbourhood mural.

### Sustainable Sundays

- Social media campaign highlighting helpful information and tips on sustainable living (mostly food sustainability based).
- It's purpose is to provide educational content, while introducing the audience to other local organizations/companies that do work that highlights sustainable initiatives. Aims to keep consumers connected to local companies/producers

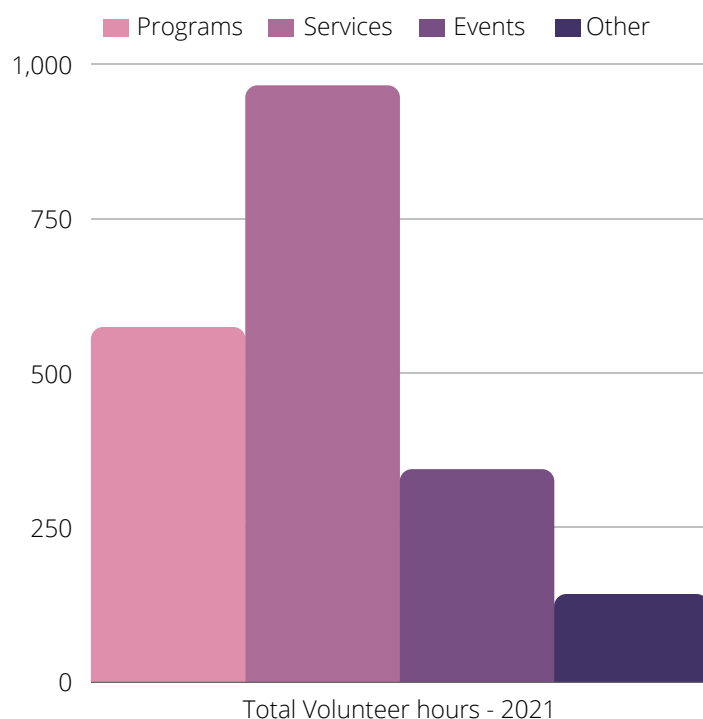




## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

*"My experience volunteering with Oaklands Community Association provided a great opportunity for me to develop my career, interests and passion in food security and sovereignty. My favourite part of being Oaklands Food Services volunteer was working alongside other passionate individuals who showed real care and attention to the work - it was a great atmosphere. The position developed my potential by allowing me to take on the responsibility of helping to train/teach others and trust in my individual tasked work. During my time there, I felt personal development in communication skills and community outreach through creating social media content. I also felt personal fulfillment as the Oaklands Pantry has both succeeded in reducing food waste via food rescue incentives while also aiding people/families with their food security. I look forward to going every week as a Food Services volunteer!" - Julia Proppe, Community Food Services Volunteer*

*"I have been volunteering with the Oaklands Pantry since last Summer. I have so enjoyed meeting all the incredibly dedicated staff and volunteers and learning about food security in our neighbourhood. I am so grateful to have the opportunity to give back to my community and I look forward to finding more ways to volunteer with the Centre." - Teresa Shook, Oaklands Pantry Volunteer*



# NEXT STEPS

## STRATEGIC PLAN | 2022 - 2025



### Facilities / Physical Assets

We know our facilities and physical assets provide necessary services for our community and revenue to help us carry out our work.

- Maintain existing facilities including Little Acorns & community garden
- Explore the acquisition of a second bus
- Consider selling or trading of assets
- New building or expansion of facilities
- Continue to pursue opening of Hamilton facilities

### Programming / Community Service

We create and deliver relevant community services and programming for those we serve.

- Maintain core programming:
  - Events and markets
  - Childcare
  - Food security
  - Community Garden
  - Rec programs
  - Legacy
- Rebuild successful past events and programs
- Identify and Develop Emerging Programming:
  - Engage community feedback on programs
  - Mental health programs
  - Housing programs
  - Adapt/diversify childcare

### Partnerships / Collaborations / Connections / Relationships

We maintain our existing relationships and seek new strategic alliances to further our work in support of our community.

- Engage with various stakeholders including:
  - Schools & school boards
  - ROSCO & other OSC orgs
  - Volunteers
  - Neighborhood planning
  - City
  - General community
  - Provincial Government
  - Municipal government
  - Local business
  - N.H.S
- Develop brand & communications strategy:
  - Align with Oakland values
  - Brand strengthening
  - Clarify communication
  - Hub / Resource & Info:
    - Develop resource list of partnerships etc.
    - Provide a platform

### Human Resources

We continue to have staff, board and volunteers who are highly valued, engaged, informed and working collaboratively.

- Retain & recruit
- Explore benefits, wages, prof dev, incentives, training
- Increase board / staff connection
- Conduct outreach recruitment
- Succession planning
- Update policies including:
  - Staff reviews
  - Communications

### Financing / Financial Sustainability

We realize our financial health is needed to allow us to remain a vital provider of services within our community.

- Maintain & build financial assets
- Continue to pursue grants
- Govt subsidy (W.E.)
- CCOF
- Monthly financial reporting
- Build contingency funds
- Seek new revenue opportunities
- Explore social enterprise
- Develop relationships with donors & funders
- Utilize a 'shop around' lens

# CONTACT

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