

Beacon Community Services History: Who's the boss!

2024 marked Beacon Community Services' (BCS) 50th year of service - Helping People, Empowering Communities, Improving Lives. In this article we look at who was responsible for running the Society and their success at retaining staff over the years.

In its 50 years of operations, Beacon has only had eight (8) different Chief Executive Officers. Initially, the title was Executive Director, becoming Chief Executive Officer in 2010. The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for operational management and reports to the Board. The Chair leads the Board in overseeing the Society's governance and strategic direction.

Based on the number of staff with long service records, it is clear that, over the years, Beacon has provided a great working environment.

Gerry Edwards: First Executive Director, May 1982-February 1986



Although the Society was formed in 1974, it wasn't until 1982 that an Executive Director was put in place. Gerry¹ volunteered for the position as it was only supposed to be for a few months while they recruited someone. The few months ended up being almost 4 years, only ending when Gerry retired in February 1986. In 1984, then Board Chair, Anne Johnston, said, "Although it was a volunteer position, Gerry received a \$9,000 honorarium each year."²

Gerry was a bomber pilot during World War II and was awarded the Distinguished Flying cross (DFC) for "acts of valour, courage or devoting to duty performed while flying in active operations against the enemy"³. After serving as commandant of the National Defense College, he retired from the service in the rank of Major-General and settled in North Saanich.

Gerry started at Peninsula Community Association as a volunteer driver in 1977 when the Society functioned out of the "little white house" on Fifth Street. Other programs

¹ Photo courtesy 1984 June 20 The Review

² 1986 March 19 The Review

³ <https://www.canada.ca/en/air-force/corporate/reports-publications/on-windswept-heights-2/91-heritage.html>



offered at that time were the Sidney Teen Activity Group (STAG) and Home Support Services. He joined the Board in 1978 and became Board Chair in 1980.

By 1986 under Gerry's management, those three programs had expanded to seven, including Community Counselling, Youth Services, Peninsula Employment Project, Grieving Support Services, and an umbrella for groups such as the Peninsula Single Parents.⁴

In an interview in 2024, Sharon Wiegand, Volunteer Coordinator in 1977, said "Gerry was a really great guy. He knew everyone and when he came on board in 1977, things really started to take off."

Jean Jones: First Paid Executive Director, May 1986-1987



Jean started on May 1, 1986 after increased United Way funding enabled the Association to hire their first paid executive director.

At the time she was hired, she was living with her husband and three children in Ottawa. Previously an administrator for the regional municipality of Ottawa-Carleton, she was well known in Victoria for her work with the Cool-Aid Society, the Western Community Outreach Program, and the ministry of human resources. She had previously worked with Beacon as the Canada Works Program supervisor in the late 70s and as the Volunteer Services Program Coordinator in 1981.⁵

Barbara Fraser: Executive Director, September 1987-December 1992



Barbara Storrier nee Fraser was confirmed as Acting Executive Director at the Annual General Meeting in September 1987, becoming the Executive Director in January 1988. She remained in that position until the end of 1992.

Prior to joining the Board, Barbara was the Home Support Services Coordinator. Under her management, the home support team provided a companion or companion-housekeeper service supporting people who did not require homemaker skills but who couldn't be left alone because of physical, mental, or social

⁴ The Review February 12, 1986

⁵ The Review May 31, 1986



reasons, and emergency care for children who were too sick to attend school or day care and whose parents were unable to stay home with their child.

Katie Lovallo: Acting Executive Director, 1993, 1994

Katie was confirmed as Acting Executive Director on two occasions. She served early in 1993 until September of that year, taking over after Barbara left and stepping away when Seona was hired, and then again for a few months in 1994 when Seona was on leave.⁶

When she wasn't serving as the Acting Executive Director, she was the Program Support Services Coordinator. In April 1993 Program Support Services was introduced as a new management area designed to enhance program service delivery. In this role, Katie was responsible for financial administration, human resource management and general administration. In other words, she was responsible for ensuring that program staff had all the resources necessary to deliver quality service to their clients.⁷

Seona Stephen: Executive Director September 1993-September 1995



Seona⁸ was hired on September 1, 1993 as the Executive Director. She continued in this role until September 1995.

Seona was a registered nurse having taken her education in Edinburgh, Scotland. During her career, she worked at both Victoria General and Royal Jubilee hospitals. In 2004, she became the director of Carlton House, an Independent Retirement Community in Oak Bay, retiring from that position in 2014.

⁶ Source 2024 interview with Katie Lovallo

⁷ 1995 Annual Report

⁸ Photo courtesy Oak Bay News July 14, 2014



Isobel Mackenzie: Chief Executive Officer, September 1995-March 2014



Isobel Mackenzie joined the Association in September 1995 as the Executive Director. In 2010, she was promoted to Chief Executive Officer. After 19 years with the Society, she left in 2014 and was appointed the Seniors Advocate for British Columbia, creating the first such position in Canada.

Isobel had over 20 years' experience working with seniors in home care, licensed care, community services and volunteer services. Isobel led B.C.'s largest not-for-profit agency, serving over 6,000 seniors annually. In this work, Isobel led the implementation of a new model of dementia care that has become a national best practice, and led the first safety accreditation for homecare workers, among many other accomplishments. Isobel has been widely recognized for her work and was named B.C. CEO of the Year for the not-for-profit sector and nominated as a Provincial Health Care Hero.

Prior to her appointment as the Seniors Advocate, Isobel served on a number of national and provincial boards and commissions, including the BC Medical Services Commission, the Canadian Homecare Association, BC Care Providers, BC Care Aide and Community Health Worker Registry, and the Capital Regional District Housing Corporation. Isobel also served on the University of Victoria's Board of Governors.

Isobel received both her undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Victoria and has a Certificate in Health Care Leadership from the University of Toronto.⁹

⁹ <https://www.seniorsadvocatebc.ca/about-the-advocate/>



Bob Boulter, Chief Executive Officer: March 2014-June 2021



Previously Beacon's Vice President of Finance, Bob Boulter¹⁰ was appointed acting Chief Executive Officer (CEO) after former CEO Isobel Mackenzie was appointed B.C.'s first seniors advocate in March.

"We conducted a comprehensive and thorough evaluation process and it was obvious that Bob's skill set and knowledge would serve Beacon well," said then Board Chair Keith Rolfe, when announcing the hiring in 2014.

"He has a clear vision of Beacon's role in helping people and improving lives in our community. And he has the financial acumen and administrative experience needed to deliver on that vision."

A chartered accountant who holds a degree in business administration from the University of Regina, Boulter held senior finance positions with several large natural resource companies as well as Victoria's Carmanah Technologies.

As Beacon Community Services' Vice President of Finance since January 2010, he oversaw the modernization of technology to aid in Beacon's service delivery.

He was also instrumental in successful contract bids for Beacon to deliver a variety of community assistance programs, including in the fields of employment services and home support.

"Beacon has a really solid foundation and a history of strong service to the community." Boulter said in 2014 when accepting the position.

"I want to build on that with our volunteers, staff and community partners – to make sure we dedicate our resources to helping people where and when they need it, as effectively and compassionately as possible."

¹⁰ Black Press Media Aug 10, 2014



Tricia Gueulette, Chief Executive Officer, June 2021-Current



Tricia was appointed Chief Executive Officer of Beacon Community Services in June 2021. Prior to joining Beacon, she led the Canadian Veterans Vocational Rehabilitation Services program on behalf of March of Dimes Canada and WCG Services.

Her professional background includes more than 20 years of executive and senior leadership positions in community, employment, and vocational rehabilitation services across Canada.

A Certified Vocational Rehabilitation Professional and Registered Rehabilitation Professional, she holds an MBA degree in Executive Management from Royal Roads University and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a minor in Economics from the University of Victoria.

Tricia was also pleased to volunteer her time on the boards of ASPECT (Association of Service Providers for Employability and Career Training) – an organization which is the voice of BC's community-based training and workplace development service providers, as well as SafeCare BC – the health and safety association for continuing care.

Staff Retention & Recognition

Over the years, staff have been recognized for their years of service using a similar approach as that used for volunteers. Staff were recognized in several categories: 20 years and over, 15 years, 10 years and 5 years. Staff received a bouquet, the cost of which was originally based on the category, for example, the bouquet cost \$5.00 for the 5-year group, \$10.00 for the ten-year group, \$15.00 for the 15-year group, and so on.

Source Kathy Mason Volunteer Coordinator at the time

The information in the following tables is based on a staff list compiled in 2009 and information from the HR database provided in 2024. Information for some years is missing.



Staff Years of Service

Staff with 5+ Years of Service	
#Years	# of Staff
30+	2
25-29	3
20-24	25
15-19	42
10-14	90
5-9	74
Total # Staff	236

Staff at Milestone # Years	
#Years	# of Staff
30+	2
25-29	3
20-24	25
15	17
10	34
5	34
Total # Staff	115

