



# LUMARA

GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT CARE



Annual Report  
**2022-2023**

*Lumara's vision is to foster a community of belonging that provides grieving families with a memorable and positive experience of connection, healing, and hope.*

*Our mission is to provide education, support, and counselling services to individuals, families, and groups who are grieving the death of a loved one or coping with a life-threatening illness.*

## *Lumara's Values*

*We Begin With  
Love, Compassion & Kindness*

*We Believe In  
Transformation, Resilience & Hope*

*We Work With  
Integrity, Courage & Creativity*

*We Trust In  
Play, In Beauty & In Nature*

*We Depend On  
Place, Community & Belonging*

# Letter from Chair of the Board

Dear Friends,

Welcome to Lumara Grief & Bereavement Care Society's 2022/2023 Annual Report. It is a pleasure to share all our community has achieved together over the past year.

At the beginning of 2022, we still found ourselves in a state of uncertainty. The pandemic wasn't over, and the need for innovative, transformational grief care continued to rise.

We had already pivoted to be a fully virtual organization. As restrictions eased, we brought back in-person programs, most notably Camp Kerry, as well as Synergy Community Choir and local support groups. However, we knew that our virtual offerings allowed us to bring our powerful model to more Canadians in more places.

Through the innovation prompted by the pandemic, Lumara is now a truly hybrid organization – and one that continues to evolve. On Page 6, you'll read about how we've articulated our values to ensure that however – and in whichever – way we grow, we remain grounded in our true purpose: **to surround children, youth, adults and families facing illness, grief and loss with a compassionate community.**

The future will most certainly hold more challenging decisions and unexpected twists, but Lumara has shown our ability to stay grounded by values that will continue to guide our way. **We would not be the healthy, growing organization we are today without your support.** Thank you for sharing this inspiring journey.

On a personal note, my term as Board Chair comes to an end on June 27, 2023. It has been a true honour to serve this community that has shaped me and the people I love. I am immensely grateful for the donors, my fellow board members, the staff and contractors, and our volunteers, as well as Heather's exceptional leadership: Lumara's strength is in the way we come together to create this compassionate community, and our future has never looked stronger. Thanks to you, Lumara can continue its vital work furthering the development of excellence in grief and bereavement care in Canada.

With gratitude,



Steve Kirstiuk  
Chair of the Board  
Lumara Grief & Bereavement Care Society



*Over Steve's time as Board Chair, he has helped shape our board into one that provides strategic oversight for Lumara that helps us both deepen the quality of our services while expanding our reach.*

*Thank you, Steve!*

## In 2022-23, Lumara reached:



# Camp Kerry

*"Camp is my time to slow down from all of the busy-ness of life and to get to love my person that I lost. I think about him, honour him, and just love him and miss him."*

*- Leah, Mother and Peer Mentor*

*It's more than just a Camp; it's a Compassionate Community*

Camp Kerry remains our signature program – and a highlight each year! In September, we welcomed our community of grieving families, compassionate volunteers, and professional team members to Rockridge Canyon in Princeton, BC. A few weeks later, we gathered at Kinark Outdoor Centre in Minden, Ontario, amid the turning fall leaves.

Each four-day retreat was filled with community meals, fun outdoor activities, music, art, and long-time Camp Kerry traditions including the campfire and memory service. We also welcomed new forms of engagement, from therapy dogs to improv to physiotherapy! Everything that happens at Camp is guided by the intention to strengthen family bonds and build a broader sense of community.



*"At Camp Kerry, there's the beauty around us we can breathe into, which reminds us of the beauty within ourselves and each other... You never leave camp the way you started."*

*- Jen, Music Therapist*



*"I never want to leave this place. It's a big family. Everyone's here, everyone cares. No one else gets you like the people here."*

*-- Eric, Youth Participant and Volunteer*



*Have you seen our new Camp video? Watch it here!*

## A new kind of Camp!

Minecraft is beloved around the world as a place where kids can build, explore, and create. As Lumara's music therapist Meaghan Jackson was trying to imagine creative ways to reach kids who were Zoomed out from the pandemic, she had an idea: what if we ran a camp just for grieving children ... in Minecraft?

Soon after, **Lumaria** was born: a 3-D realm for children who have lost a loved one. Through camps and monthly meet-ups, the campers go on missions together, build creations that honour their loved ones and talk about those they've lost. In this virtual space, kids feel free to express themselves in ways that make sense for them.

"It's so fun," Meg said. "And it's working."

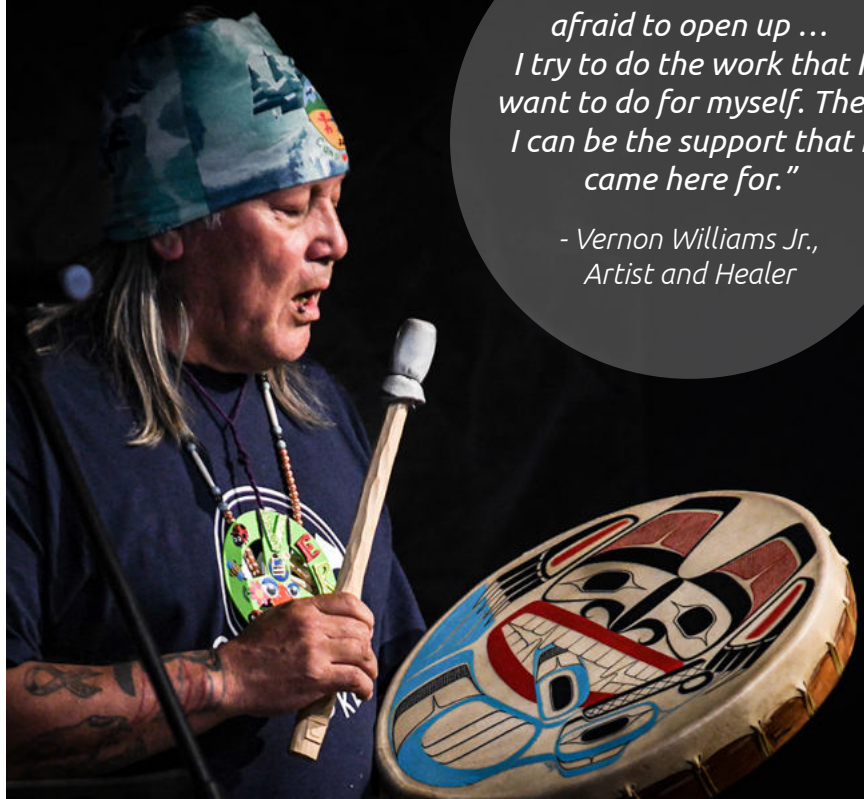
*We acknowledge the financial support of the Province of British Columbia that helps to make Camp Kerry BC possible.*

## Indigenous Elders at Camp Kerry

Indigenous ways of healing are deeply rooted in land-based healing and ceremony, as well as a core belief in the therapeutic value of the arts. Many of these concepts, passed on to us from Elders, have influenced our Camp Kerry program since our inception. Engaging Indigenous Elders at Camp Kerry has brought great value to all our participants and has enabled us to provide better support and a greater sense of safety for Indigenous families. Elders/Educators/Healers like Vernon Williams, Joe Keesickquayash, and Sue Downan have brought immense wisdom, strength, and perspective to our community.

*"I am not afraid to open up ... I try to do the work that I want to do for myself. Then I can be the support that I came here for."*

*- Vernon Williams Jr.,  
Artist and Healer*



### Camp Kerry 2022

2

Camps

209

Participants

22

New Families

20

Returning Families

78

Staff and Volunteers

# A Look at Lumara's Values



*"Once I looked at those values on the paper, I went, 'Aha, this is it!' The neat part about these values is that they're intertwined. It's hard to remember or to see where one value starts and the other one ends. There is this continuum of love, compassion, caring, and belonging; they're all in the stream and happening at once."*

- Patrick Morrissey, Volunteer

It's no secret that Lumara has experienced significant growth over the past few years. This growth corresponds with a sharp rise in the need for compassionate, creative grief care in Canada, due to the ongoing effects of the pandemic, overdose deaths, the ongoing intergenerational trauma faced by Indigenous communities, and more.

But as we face increasing demands for growth, I never want to lose the sense of intimate community that is at the core of Lumara's work. It's so important to maintain the depth and quality of care that has allowed us to provide transformative support to so many grieving Canadians.

I decided to go through the process of articulating our core values to ensure we never lose sight of who we are, no matter how we grow or change.

For over a year, we engaged staff, board members, and volunteers to reflect on what makes us **us**. We even took the values to Camp to get feedback from participants. The response? **"Oh yeah. That's Lumara."** Our values process was unique in that, instead of being aspirational, we made an effort to articulate the values that **already** ground everything we do.

Our integrity as an organization comes from how well we live the words we've written down. As we grow, I'm committed to steering us on a path that is grounded in these core values and serves our purpose: **to bring grief out of the shadows and surround those dealing with significant loss with a compassionate community of belonging where they feel seen, heard, cared for and loved.**

Heather Mohan  
Executive Director  
Lumara Grief & Bereavement Care Society



Learn more about Lumara's values by watching our Values Video!

*"One of the values that Lumara has recently written down – though they've been with Lumara for many years – is love, compassion, and kindness. And I think this is integral to this entire camp and to Lumara Society as a whole. It is the reason why this camp does such fabulous work with families in their grief and bereavement."*

- Eleanor, Volunteer

## *We Begin with Love, Compassion & Kindness:*

We engage with open hearts and open minds; extending care, kindness, love and compassion through our actions and interactions. We are shaped and sustained by the love of many people – those who are alive and those who have died – and we believe that the love and kindness we give back to the world nurtures and sustains others.

## *We Believe in Transformation, Resilience & Hope:*

We believe that everyone – regardless of their circumstances – is capable of moving towards wholeness, towards growth and healing. We strive to always hold space for hope and for possibility. We trust in the process of transformation. We believe in the power of resiliency.

## *We Work with Integrity, Courage & Creativity:*

We seek to be reliable, responsible and thoughtful. We strive to be outstanding in all that we do. We engage in processes of authentic and creative reflection that help us to continuously innovate and improve the quality of our work. We strive to learn from conflict. With courage we step out of our comfort zone and engage with bold ideas that challenge the status quo. Our activities, responsibilities and decision-making processes are undertaken with the well-being of our entire organization as the primary consideration.

## *We Trust in Play, in Beauty & in Nature:*

We believe Play is our birthright – to trust in its power helps us to live in possibility. (In this value we are especially inspired by the wisdom of children.) Beauty – in its incredible myriad of forms – is an experience that engages our senses and opens our heart. We believe that Nature is an especially powerful conduit of Beauty. Spending time on the land nurtures our bodies, soothes our minds and brings calm to our souls. When we are troubled, we turn to the power of Nature, of Beauty and of Play to bring light to our darkness and help us find our way.

## *We Depend on Place, Community & Belonging:*

We intentionally work to create opportunities, places, and spaces for people of all ages (children, youth, families, adults) to experience a sense of connectedness, community and belonging. We believe that these experiences are the strongest antidote we have for diminishing loneliness, isolation and human suffering.

## *Remembering Jen*

Jennyfer Hatch first joined the Lumara family as a music therapy volunteer with Synergy Community Choirs in 2017. Eventually, she volunteered at Camp Kerry, at youth groups and in our music therapy workshops.

Throughout the pandemic, Jen stayed deeply connected with the community through our virtual mindfulness meditation group, which she attended to help manage the pain and grief of her illness. Despite ongoing health struggles, she remained a vital member of the Lumara community, online and in-person.

Jen died in October 2022. Lumara had the privilege of walking with her through the final days of her journey with her illness. One of her last hopes was to return again to an in-person Camp Kerry, which she did shortly before she died.

Jen's love of beauty and courage in facing the end of her life has left an indelible mark on Lumara, and we honour her bravery, her compassion and the beauty of her spirit.



*"Jen (centre) with fellow music therapists Meaghan Jackson and Alexina Davis"*



# Program Re-Mix

It has been incredible to safely reintroduce in-person programming over the past two years. But we have also been humbled by the depth of connection people have been able to achieve online. As a result, Lumara now embraces both, building communities across time zones while fostering deep, in-person connections in BC and Ontario.

## In-Person Programs

1

*Tofino Youth  
Retreat*

1,010

*People reached  
through  
Indigenous  
Outreach and  
Family Support*

3

*Synergy  
Bereavement  
Choirs*

2

*Camp Kerry  
Family Retreats*

3

*Circles of Strength was back this year! We hosted three of our signature bereavement support groups in 2022, which remains a powerful source of connection and support for children and families facing significant loss.*

*"I feel hope, healing, and connection during every Synergy gathering with Alexina ... I find singing with Alexina very healing and connects the group nicely. I leave each session forever hopeful as we end with a positive intention set."*

*- 2022 Synergy Choir  
Participant*

*"Having a group of women and children that have lost their husband/dad has been huge. We don't know anyone outside of this group who has. Being able to share and connect on issues no one else would understand without losing their partner has been very positive and reassuring."*

*- 2022 Circles of Strength  
Participant*

7

*Presentations to  
over 1,500 people  
at conferences,  
workshops and  
ceremonies*



# Virtual Programs

**8**  
**Connection Groups**, from adult support groups to memoir writing

**1**  
**Indigenous Wellness Day**  
Following our June Indigenous Wellness Day, 100% of participants said they experienced a sense of hope

*"I'm grateful for this opportunity to connect and heal. The songs were so powerful and inspiring. I truly wish we were all on the land together, but zoom is just as good."*  
- 2022 Indigenous Wellness Day Participant

**1**  
**Interlude Holiday Grief Gathering**

**5**  
**Virtual Expressive Arts Therapies Workshops**

**2**  
**Minecraft Children's Camps**

**9**  
**Baby Tea Parties** for families grieving perinatal loss

*"You and all of your amazing team have created three days of the kindest, most loving and compassionate Holding Spaces imaginable. You gathered a kaleidoscope of such open-hearted human beings who were able to fill each heart they touched. I could feel so much pain and sorrow transform into light and hope. Kaleidoscope filled my heart and fed my soul."*  
- 2022 Kaleidoscope Participant

**Kaleidoscope Virtual Grief Conference**, bringing Lumara to participants around the world. The 2022 conference featured:

<b>301</b> Attendees	<b>35</b> Sessions	<b>40</b> Facilitators
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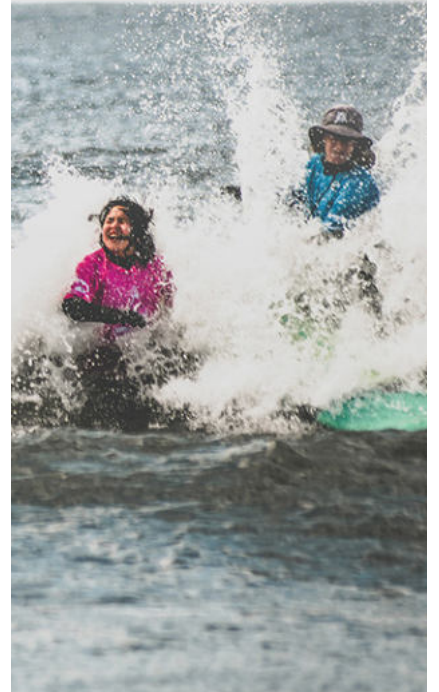
Participants represented:

<b>9</b> Provinces	<b>3</b> Countries
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**81% of participants** said attending Kaleidoscope gave them a sense of hope. **100%** said they would recommend Kaleidoscope to others in similar circumstances.

# 10 Lumara Youth Retreats

One thing we've learned over the past few years is that, despite being tech-savvy, youth do not respond well to virtual programming. They need spaces that respect their unique time of life, their irrepressible energy, and the complications of losing someone at a young age. **Our Youth Adventure Retreats give young people, aged 13-19, a space just for them, with peers who understand what they're going through.**



*"The retreat was a break from busy, stressful life to reflect on your loved ones with others that relate to you."*

*"Before I came I had no hope for myself, and now I can see there's a reason to be here in this world to grow to be a better person. I know now that I am not alone."*

*– 2022 Youth Retreat Participant*

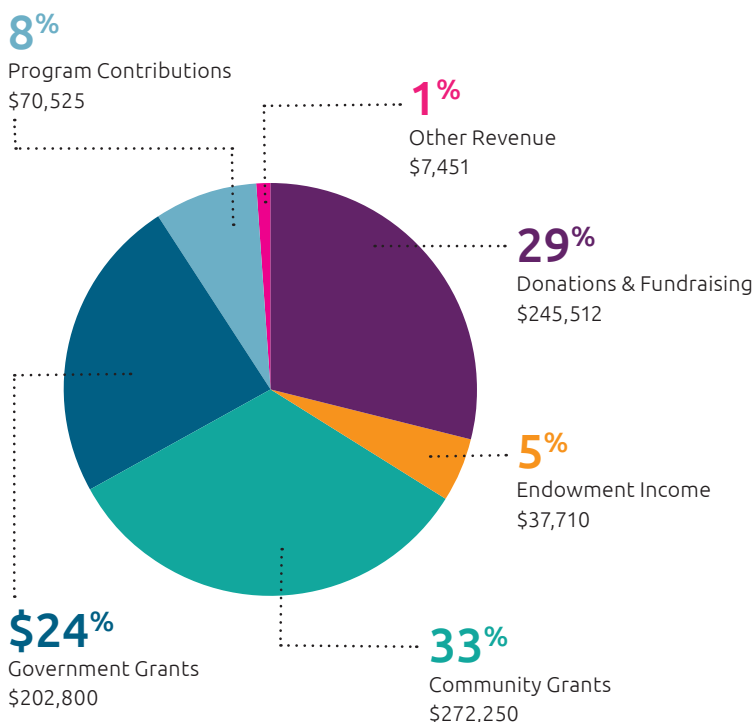
In April 2022, 10 youth gathered in Tofino for four days of camping, surfing, communal meals, and time with peers who understood what it was like to lose a loved one. Many of the youth had experienced multiple, sudden deaths. Together they discovered a place of trust and began to build a community of support for one another.

*"It helped me so much ... it changed me"*

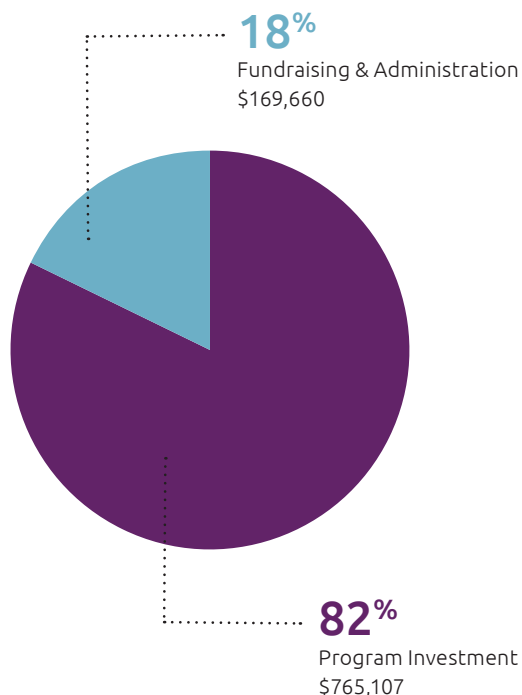


*Meet some of the incredible young people of Lumara!*

## REVENUE – \$836,248



## EXPENSES – \$934,767



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 Grizzly Bear of Yakin Point Haida Gwaii

### FUNDERS & DONORS

**We couldn't have done it without the support from many donors including these generous organizations:**

Adera Foundation Society  
 BC Centre for Palliative Care  
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 TELUS Friendly Future Foundation  
 The Federation of Community Social Services of B.C.  
 The Kerry Glade Kirstiuk Legacy Fund  
 United Way BC  
 Van Tel/Safeway Credit Union Legacy Fund  
 Vancouver Foundation

## Give



Lumara is committed to making our services accessible to everyone who needs them. That means programs are available either free of charge or on a sliding scale. We depend on the generosity of our donors to cover costs like facility rental fees, professional fees, art supplies and more. Your support ensures that people who are grieving can connect with the community they need.

## Volunteer



The hard work and dedication of our volunteers has always been at the heart of Lumara's community. Our volunteers play a critical role in our program delivery, and we are grateful to each and every one of them. If you'd like to volunteer this year, please reach out!

## Learn



Educating others about our philosophy and best practices for grief and bereavement care has always been important to us. In recent years, we've seen the impact of this work and are inspired to do even more. Join us for one of Lumara's interactive learning opportunities or encourage your friends or colleagues to do so.

**Visit [LumaraSociety.org](https://LumaraSociety.org) to Join Us Today**



**LUMARA**  
GRIEF & BEREAVEMENT CARE

### **HEAD OFFICE**

322 - 198 Island Highway East, P.O. Box 809, Parksville, BC V9P 2G8

### **BC LOWER MAINLAND PROGRAM CENTRE**

The Wellness Centre at New Westminster Secondary School

### **ONTARIO OFFICE**

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