



Victoria Stroke Recovery Association

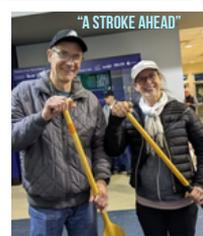
ANNUAL REPORT

2024



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Remember:
You are the **Captain** of your Own Boat !




"You cannot control the direction of the Winds, but you can **adjust your sails**"



ROCKIN' 60 UPDATE

www.victoriastroke recovery.org

\$1392.75

STAY TUNED

\$571.25 TO GO



SELF MANAGEMENT






Birthday Fundraiser: \$1964

SUSAN EDWARDS - SPEECH THERAPIST PRESIDENT VSRA

FAMILY



STORY LOVER



President's Report AGM May 2, 2025:

The VSRA, a volunteer-led organisation, aims to support stroke survivors and care partners in enhancing their quality of life and promoting independent living. We are grateful for our dedicated hospitality volunteers: Kathy Rankin, John Scattergood, Freddy Leadbeater, and Susan Cabeldu, and we warmly welcome Rolly Beauregard and Peter Mercanti, who have been active as greeters. Gregg Meikeljohn generously offered his marketing expertise pro bono, aiding our mission. Together with Peter, both long time members of the Vancouver Island Dragon Boat Communities, they are working to launch a pilot para-dragon boat team for our members.

We also appreciate our ongoing contractors: Coordinator Mary-Anne Gibbs, SLP Marie Shuman and her UVic volunteers, exercise leader Alexis Moores, and music therapist Shannon Perkins-Carr. They provide familiar routines for our members each week. Clinical counsellor Lycia Rodrigues has engaged with care partner support groups, addressing the social and emotional impacts of stroke. Our community thrives, with growing membership, and Lynne Young, our board secretary, introduced the phrase: "From Surviving to Thriving."

Board Update:

Susan Edwards steps down as President, having rebuilt the community and encouraged talent development. Her efforts were highlighted when 100+ Women Who Care generously donated \$27,800 for aphasiasservices. Susan intends to assist with the stewardship of these funds as a speech-language pathologist while continuing to connect with members as a director at large.

Richard Brimmell, who joined the board in 2024, served as Acting President and now takes on the Vice President role, ensuring a smooth transition and maintaining focus on vital operational details. Dr. Noreen Frisch, with her extensive nursing experience, has graciously stepped into the President role, enhancing our leadership capacity.

Lynne Young and Mary-Anne Gibbs are digitising our documents to ensure compliance with the Societies Act and accessibility to emergency information. Alvin Yanchuk, our Treasurer, collaborates with our volunteer bookkeeper and accounting firm to maintain updated financial records. The full 2024 financial report is available if you'd like. Thank you to Alvin, Lauren, and Bill Cox, our fundraising champion, who have secured Community Grants from the Victoria Foundation, the United Way, the Heung Foundation, the Hamber Foundation, the Rotary Club of Victoria, Sannich, the Susan and Wayne Mew Foundation, Music Heals and many other individual donors.

This year, I have reflected on the importance of communication, particularly following a stroke. We have the resources to invest in this area further, recognising the dedication of SLP Marie Shuman. As we continue to grow, I recall the wisdom of my gardener friend: the first year they sleep, the second year they creep, and the third year they leap. We see our community leaping with increased participation and new initiatives.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the VSRA Board of Directors,
Susan Edwards, MSc., RSLP, President.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

PRESIDENT

NOREEN FRISCH, PHD



VICE PRESIDENT

RICHARD BRIMMELL PENG



SECRETARY

LYNNE YOUNG, PHD



**TREASURER
STROKE SURVIVOR**

ALVIN YANCHUK, PHD



PAST PRESIDENT

SUSAN EDWARDS MSC RSLP



CARE PARTNER

JENNIFER BEADLE



STROKE SURVIVOR

GREGG MICKLEJOHN



STROKE SURVIVOR

BILL COX



See website for bio details : www.victoria strokesurvivors.org



**Activity Director
Mary-Anne Gibbs**

Volunteers

• Hospitality



• CAMPUS → UVIC Students





“ VICTORIA IS THE BEST PLACE IN THE WORLD!! ”

Wayne - VSRA Member & Donor



“



**Remember:
It's hospitality
with a lot of
charm**



”

MISSION/VISION

Mission

To support and give hope to stroke survivors and care givers in a safe and inclusive space to improve overall health, independence and quality of life.

We achieve our mission by:

- * providing stroke survivors and care partners with counseling, group support programs, education and social activities**
- * assisting stroke survivors and their care partners with resources to improve quality of life and help survivors to live independently**
- * providing stroke survivors with speech therapy and adaptive physical exercises as a continuation of their rehabilitation after discharge from hospital**
- * increasing stroke awareness for the general public - the causes, symptoms, prevention and impact of strokes. Providing the public with brochures, guides, seminars and presentations that explain the causes, symptoms, prevention and impact of strokes**



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

1. Grew membership by + 55% (Sept. 2023 (39) to Sept. 2024 (59))
2. Extended programs by 2 months (July and Aug + 18% for year)
3. Grew Endowment fund to \$38000 (or annual disbursement of \$1750 or + 130%).
4. Highlights of our outreach program;
 - o Partnered with United Way and presented 6 well-received Impact Talks to their clients
 - o Presented the VSRA story to 100 Women Who Care
 - o Presented a Stroke Awareness presentation at the Friday Forum at James Bay New Horizons senior centre.
 - o Monthly Stroke Discharge meetings at the Victoria General Hospital
 - o Times Columnist article by Jeff Bell - Mother's Stroke Inspires Speech Pathologist's Career (Susan Edwards)
 - o Victoria Foundation Hosted Organisation eNews VSRA article on CAMPUS program
5. Frailty Prevention lecture by Dr. Patrick McGowan - Dec 13, 2024
6. Self-Management Program for Stroke Survivors and Care Partners (5-Part Series)
7. Victoria Foundation's Smart & Caring Community Fund matching endowment fund grant - \$2500.
8. Added an Art Therapy class - moulding clay
9. Fund Raising: A) United Way, B) Victoria Foundation, C) Y.P. Hueng Foundation D) Susan Edward Birthday Fundraiser E) Susan and Wayne Mew foundation. F) Don Brown Estate, G) Dee Morris Estate H) CanadaHelps Giving Tuesday I) 100 + Women Who Care
10. New Care Partner Councillor - Lycia Rodrigues - Clinical Counsellor
11. Celebration of Life of members from the last decade (22 members)
12. Paperless File for VSRA documents using Google Docs
13. Improved financial reporting - simplified and improved financial transaction processes
14. Developed the CAMPUS program; Communication and Aphasia Mentorship Program for Undergraduate Students
15. Planning a Para Dragon Boat Team program. (2025-26)





VSRA Membership 2024/25 (April 2025)

Group

- Stroke Survivors
- Care Partners (CP)
- Coffee/Greeting/CP Volunteers
- UVic Volunteers
- Board of Directors
- Contractors

Numbers

- 40 +
- 25 (9 non-members)
- 8
- 7-14 (Varies r/t term)
- 6-7
- 6



SPECIAL EVENTS



Our annual events allow us to socialize in different settings, and recognize volunteers who support us all year. We believe in supporting each other in our own community as best we can.

SUMMER PICNIC

The annual Summer Picnic was held on June 28th and was a great outdoor event that brought the entire membership together. Featuring BBQ, snacks and drinks, games and social interaction this is a can't-miss event which is always well attended. This year the weather was perfect and we feed 65 people, members, volunteers and staff. Thanks everyone!



CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

Our annual Christmas Lunch was held at the Victoria Yacht Club on Dec. 6, 2024. Hosted by Maureen and Bob Bennett, over 70 members, stroke survivors, care partners, contractors, and volunteers attended. The food was great, and the Christmas decorations put us all in the spirit of the season. A silent auction received a lot of interest, and the proceeds went toward the VSRA Endowment fund.



Activity Director: Mary-Anne Gibbs



CoOrdinator Report:

2024 has been such an exciting year at VSRA. We have seen a growth in membership and our social time, groups and activities are buzzin. Not only have we seen higher numbers but as a self-support group, members have been stepping up to share their skills and insights to our group through presentations, volunteer roles and personal support of each other. We are a true community of care.

Co-Ordinator:
Mary-Anne Gibbs

Highlights of our Social Program:

Each week we aim to fulfil our catch phrase of moving “Beyond Surviving to Thriving”. We do this by engaging with all of our faculties - our intellect, our bodies, our emotions, our creativity and our connectedness. In 2024 we had educational talks from physicians about the latest stroke research and treatments, presentations from allied health professionals in the community as well as learning about the flora of Northern BC! We have enjoyed music and juggling performances as well as engaged in music, exercise and art ourselves. Members have given presentations on various topics and two of our volunteers have taught a stroke related Self-Management program. We have celebrated, played a few games but most importantly, connected with each other.





A weekly communication group is directed by a Speech-Language Pathologist – Marie Shuman, BA (Hons), MSc., Registered - SLP(C), #2541 – along with the support of volunteers (many of whom are pursuing a career in speech-language pathology).

One of our important programs, is called **CAMPUS: Communication and Aphasia Mentorship Program for Undergraduate Students**. VSRA has been providing intergenerational mentorship volunteer opportunities, in the Aphasia Communication Group, to local university students, for over a decade. Most of these students have gone on, to be accepted into graduate programs, in Speech Pathology and Audiology, all across Canada, become Speech-Language Pathologists (SLP), and are providing much needed assistive technology and services, to people who have difficulty with speaking, listening, reading and writing, following a stroke. Students often remark on how enriched their lives are, through interacting with our members, during the mentorship process, and the stroke survivors with aphasia, appreciate knowing that future professionals, will understand that it is their communication – not their intelligence – that has been affected by the stroke.



VSRA is able to provide skilled training time for student volunteers, from our registered SLP, and the opportunity for UVic volunteer students, to interact with stroke survivor members, who have aphasia, both more frequently and more confidently. We believe that this experience, will empower students, as they become proficient in clear, empathetic, and flexible conversations, and will inform future intergenerational, personal, and professional communications. The volunteer experience, provides students with an education, and experience, that they do not get in class, but will greatly help them apply for grad schools, and scholarships, followed by work as speech language pathologists across the country. Our current registered Speech- Language Pathologist, has recently increased the number of volunteers, and recruited 16+ UVic student volunteers, to the point where we now have one to one aphasia stroke survivors to student volunteers. Most sessions begin with a warm-up exercise, followed by 1-2 group activities which vary each week. Some activities are focused on everyday tasks, while others are based on member requests/experiences. Previous activities have included a conversation-based card game, show and tell, poetry, word retrieval exercises, story sharing, targeted-practice board games and word-meaning activities. Feedback and ideas are highly encouraged. This group is for you! Each member is provided with communication supports and strategies to enhance their word-meaning activities. Feedback and ideas are highly encouraged. This group is for YOU! Each member is provided with communication supports and strategies to enhance their experience. Participants are encouraged to talk as much as possible while they are in this highly supportive environment, and any form of communication is welcomed. Both one-on-one and group conversations take place, and the group is a very positive environment for people with aphasia, volunteers, and the SLP running the session.





ADAPTIVE EXERCISE CLASS

The physical exercise program is coordinated by Alexis Moores, a talented person with considerable experience in the field of adaptive physical fitness training. She knows our conditions well, our strengths and our limitations and customises a program that meets our needs. She leads a sit-down chair exercise program. We use such equipment as hand weights, therabands, rubble balls, yoga cushions to create a variety of aerobic, strength and flexibility exercises that provide us the fitness we need. Physical fitness training is generally beneficial for stroke survivors, contributing to improved functional capacity, quality of life, and reduced risk of future cardiovascular events.

We have a lot of fun while we do an ever changing dynamic exercise workout.

- Chair Exercises
- Therabands
- Exercise balls
- Hand Weights



Alexis Moores



CAREPARTNER COUNSELLING & SUPPORT



**Lycia Rodrigues -
Registered Clinical Counsellor**
<https://www.oceanos-counselling.com/references>

Fostering Meaningful Connections and Enhancing Support for Care-Partners:

This past year, I have connected with our care-partners each month during our support group and noticed real human connections and meaningful relationships among our participants. So often, learning how to manage the difficulties encountered in caring for our family members is the focus. However, during our support group with the care-partners we focus on what the quality of life is for us, and how we are reconciling our relationship with all the losses that we have encountered in our lifetime.

We have focused our sessions on common caregiving themes including: Self-care, Healthcare System Navigation, Relationship Changes and Future Planning. It is vital to maintain our own health and well-being while caring for another (1) . I am invigorated by the stories of the care- partners and their experiences of hope and connection. I am grateful for the deep connections we have made, and I have been humbled and inspired to see care-partners move toward self- compassion and greater well-being.

Stroke Survivors Support Group: Creating a Healing Journey with Less Isolation One of the milestones in the support group with stroke survivors was the opportunity to connect in a space of vulnerability while encouraging members to share their own needs, and creative healing journeys. In these past months, I learned firsthand that the experience of surviving a stroke can be socially isolating. This inspired me to facilitate conversations about our psychosocial needs and emotional support. Emotional support is an essential element contributing to psychological vitality and wellbeing. (2)

Facing ongoing losses is an art and can be the toughest work we might ever encounter.

Grieving after a stroke brings up a lot from the past. This is normal. Moving through ongoing losses requires energy and focus, and is invaluable.

Connecting to others to help reduce feelings of isolation is essential. Thanks to our conversations during this monthly support group, I was particularly inspired to hear participants feel a greater sense of community. Receiving feedback from members who attended our sessions is particularly rewarding. Many participants have reported an increased sense of belonging and community engagement. This journey of facilitating the support group with stroke survivor members has been incredibly enriching.

References:

1- Vidyalakshmi Sundar, Susan W. Fox & Kimberly G. Phillips (2014) Transitions in Caregiving: Evaluating a Person-Centered Approach to Supporting Family Caregivers in the Community, *Journal of Gerontological Social Work*, 57:6-7, 750-765, DOI: 10.1080/01634372.2013.847885

2- Cohen LB, Parent M, Taveira TH, Dev S, Wu W-C. A description of patient and provider experience and clinical outcomes after heart failure shared medical appointment. *J Patient Exp*. 2017;4(4):169-76. doi: 10.1177/2374373517714452 [DOI] [PMC free article] [PubMed] [Google]





MUSIC THERAPY

Each month, usually on the third Friday, 25 to 32 people gather for music therapy with:

Shannon Perkins Carr, MTA, MA, B. Mus.

Music therapy offers significant benefits for stroke survivors, aiding in recovery of motor skills, speech, and cognitive functions, while improving mood and motivation. By stimulating multiple brain regions, music helps in rewiring neural pathways and promoting neuroplasticity, which is crucial for recovery.

Shannon leads an hour of music, often beginning with introductions where we sing each person's name back to them in a suggested melody or rhythm.

Instruments such as hand chimes, small drums, tambourines, maracas, and bells, are handed out to those who wish to keep rhythm. After some belly breathing and vocal warm-up exercises, Shannon guides us through familiar songs using her guitar, including some old classics.

When we use the hand chimes, we form groups and Shannon conducts us to play harmonious renditions of other well-known tunes. It's a marvelous experience that leaves us feeling fulfilled for having created beautiful music together.

- helps cognitive function
- promotes neuroplasticity
- breathing and vocal warm ups
- hand chimes, varied hand instruments
- guitar music, familiar songs

**Music Therapy:
Shannon Perkins Carr, MTA, MA, B. Mus.**





OUTREACH

Our outreach program helps VSRA reach a wider audience and connect with the community, raise awareness, and secure support for our mission. By actively engaging with individuals and groups who might not otherwise access our services, we can increase our impact and build stronger relationships.

VSRA employ several ways to inform our community. We increase our awareness and visibility by visiting the Victoria General Hospital once a month for stroke patient discharge meetings, where we tell them about our programs and give out information Rackcards (and distribute them throughout the hospital), with our contact info. Website (victoriastrokerecovery.org) is another way VSRA provided the public contact info to our activity coordinator, other social media such as Facebook, local newspaper articles, Victoria Foundation e-newsletters, UVic student volunteers also inform the community. A new initiative in 2025 will see VSRA participate in 50/50 draws for the Victoria Royals hockey team and the HarbourCats baseball team. In the planning stages, we hope to form a Dragon Boat team at the Victoria Canoe and Kayak Club, where we will mix with other dragon boat paddlers, which will build self-efficacy and help mitigate marginalisation by visible public exposure.

- 100+** VGH: Stroke survivors
- 2** Vancouver Island: SPORTING EVENTS: - HOCKEY, BASEBALL
- 2** Senior Centers James Bay New Horizons Oak Bay Senior Centre
- 2** SOCIAL MEDIA: WEBSITE, FACEBOOK
- 2** PRINT MEDIA: TIMES COLOMIST, UBC NEWSLETTER

VSRA Outreach Victoria General Hospital Stroke Discharge





Rackcard

(outside)

Trifold brochure handout given to all VGH stroke survivor discharge patients to outline VSRA programs, schedule, donors, and contact information. (outside)

<p>FRIDAY SESSION SCHEDULE</p>	<p>????'S</p>	<p>Victoria Stroke Recovery Association</p>
<p>10:30 am - 11 am</p>  <p>Coffee Social</p>	 <p>Phone 250-383-2623</p>	<p>STROKE GROUP</p>
<p>11 am - 12 pm</p>  <p>Communication Skills</p>  <p>Exercise & Mobility</p>  <p>Care Partner Support</p>	 <p>info@victoriastrokerecovery.org</p> <p>Donors:</p>  <p>VICTORIA FOUNDATION</p>  <p>United Way Southern Vancouver Island</p>  <p>Rotary Victoria Saanich</p>	
<p>12 pm - 12:30 pm</p>  <p>Lunch (bring your own)</p>	 <p>Susan and Wayne Mew Foundation</p>  <p>Y.P. Heung Foundation</p>  <p>Habitat for Humanity</p>  <p>The Hamber Foundation</p>	
<p>12:30 pm - 1:30 pm</p>  <p>Social Programming (varies weekly)</p>	<p>Please Support</p>  <p>Registered Charitable Organization</p> 	



Rackcard

(inside)

Trifold brochure handout given to all VGH stroke survivor discharge patients to outline VSRA programs, schedule, donors, and contact information. (inside)

WHO? **Stroke survivors & Care Partners**

You should be:

- Independently mobile
- Able to eat independently
- Able to attend to personal hygiene and toileting

WHERE? **Knox Presbyterian Church**
2964 Richmond Road, Victoria, BC

WHEN? **Every Friday**
10:30 am - 1:30 pm

WHAT? **Stroke Recovery Programs & Activities**
See Session Schedule

250.383.2623

COST? Programs and most Activities are included in your membership

Annual Membership is only \$50

VSRA

Mission Statement:

To assist stroke survivors and their caregivers maintain and improve their overall quality of life and good health so that all of those affected by a stroke can help with the ongoing recovery of the stroke survivor and enable independent living.

Programming:

Professional run VSRA programs are designed to develop communication skills, mobility, and socialization in a safe and inclusive space. We also have a support group for care partners with regular counsellor visits. Additional educational, therapy, and recreational activities include:

- Music therapy
- Educational presentation
- Brain Games
- Special Events
- Planned: Self Management, Art Therapy, Yoga... etc.



“A Stroke Ahead”

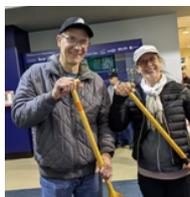


Dragon Boat Team **Pilot** Program

Study - Action Plan - Small steps - Funding
- Learn Technique - Build confidence - Paddle -
Festivals - and more....

Peter Mercanti
“Motivator”
Team Champion

“Stroke Survivor
to Thriver”



\$5 - see Bill

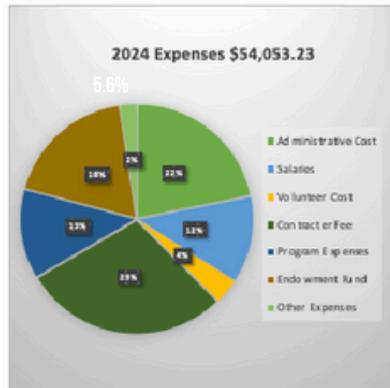
FINANCIAL SUMMARY

VSRA 2024 Financial Summary:

Income:	%	\$
Membership Fees	5%	\$ 2,750.00
Disbursements	5%	\$ 2,539.34
Grants/Donations	59%	\$ 31,646.22
Internal Fund Raise	31%	\$ 16,417.35
	100%	\$ 53,352.91



Expenses:		
Administrative Cost	22%	\$ 11,801.22
Salaries	12%	\$ 6,615.90
Volunteer Cost	4%	\$ 1,927.61
Contractor Fee	29%	\$ 15,626.25
Program Expenses	13%	\$ 6,829.54
Endowment Fund	19%	\$ 10,000.00
Other Expenses	2%	\$ 1,252.71
	100%	\$ 54,053.23





ENDOWMENT FUND



**VSRA Endowment Fund ~\$42,000
disbursement at ~\$2,100/year**



**SUPPORT
VSRA**



THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS/SUPPORTERS:

Alvin Yanchuk	Jenifer Beadle	Noel Hoskins
Andrea Tabaka	Jim Greening	Rachel Beatty
Bruce Hilchey	Juliana Chipick	Ralph Allan
Dean Karlan	Ken Waunch	Sheeri Zelazny
Dee Morris Estate	Koutnee Hoitsema	Stephanie Blazey
Don Brown Estate	Lani Morden	Stephen Morris
Dru Deek	Lynne Young	Susan Edwards
James Brackenbury	Margeret Mellon	Susan & Wayne Mew
JeanLawence	Mary Morris	William Cox
Jeff McLean	Michael Portigal	William Hodgson



*Susan and Wayne
Mew Foundation*



THANK YOU TO OUR SUPPORTERS:

**Victoria General
Hospital**



Saanich Peninsula
Stroke Recovery
Association

Knox 
Presbyterian



caorda
web solutions



**University
of Victoria**





Victoria Stroke Recovery Association



778-350-8772

leave message please



info@victoriastrokerecovery.org



<http://victoriastrokerecovery.org>

send us a message please



2964 Richmond Road,
Victoria, BC



Please
MAKE YOUR GIFT TODAY.

**Your gift could mean
the difference in a
survivor's life.**

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