

ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024

NO MORE VICTIMS
NO ONE IS DISPOSABLE

CoSA CANADA

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Executive Director's Report

During the past year, efforts to seek funding to support CoSA sites across the country have continued. These efforts have included outreach with officials of both the federal and provincial governments. In the Fall of 2023, officials from the government of NB contacted CoSA Canada regarding funding opportunities to start a local CoSA site in that province. After some discussion, it was determined that it would be best to restart a site in Moncton given the fact that CoSA had operated there until 2022 when the Public Safety 5-year grant had ended. Following several months of planning and preparation, the Moncton site officially opened its doors in the summer of 2024 with funding from the government of NB. Efforts to obtain funding from CSC Atlantic region are currently ongoing so that federal offenders can also be eligible to receive support from CoSA Moncton.

In May 2024, a decision was made by Mennonite Central Committee Ontario (MCCO) to end its funding for three local sites in Ontario, namely Toronto, Hamilton and Kitchener/Waterloo. Given this very disappointing news, CoSA Canada began immediately to consider all options to ensure the three sites could continue operations. Within a few short weeks, St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton made the decision to sponsor the CoSA Hamilton program. CoSA Canada is delighted with this decision and will work together with St. Leonard's to ensure the long-term sustainability of the CoSA program in Hamilton. During the summer of 2024, CoSA Canada has had several discussions with Public Safety officials to consider funding options to support CoSA in light of the closures of the CoSA sites operated by MCCO. These discussions are ongoing and there is cautious optimism regarding the possibility of securing some level of support in the coming months.

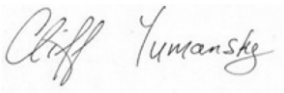
Going forward, it will be a priority for CoSA Canada to find a way to ensure a CoSA site office is reinstated in Toronto and Kitchener/Waterloo so that we can continue to offer community reintegration support to those who most need it. It will also be equally important for us to work towards resurrecting the CoSA sites in Montreal and Halifax that closed in 2022. Throughout the past year, CoSA Canada has had many meetings with CSC officials, including Commissioner Anne Kelly and her management team of Regional Deputy Commissioners (RDCs). The Commissioner was the guest speaker at the 2023 Annual General Meeting, and I was invited to make a presentation on CoSA at the November 2023 EXCOM meeting. During the winter of 2024, I met with the RDCs of the Prairie, Ontario, Quebec and Atlantic CSC regions and despite their clear support of CoSA, no funding was available for any of the local CoSA sites in those regions because of budget constraints. CoSA Canada remains hopeful that there may be funding available in the future for local sites by CSC given the significant number of core members who are federal offenders and the positive feedback we receive from CSC officials regarding our program.

In my last AGM ED report, I noted that CoSA Canada received approval from Public Safety Canada for 2-year funding to develop a Virtual Circles project following the experiences during the Pandemic. I am very pleased to note that despite some early development challenges, the program is now well on its way to delivering on many of its goals and objectives. I want to especially thank the two program Coordinators, Joy Steem and Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins, for their perseverance, creativity and belief in the program.

I want to also express my appreciation to Susan Haines for her excellent leadership as Executive Director of the National Organizations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ). This national network represents the interests of all criminal justice and corrections partners working for a common cause whether it be focused on policies, programs/funding or advocacy affecting our work in the community.

I would like to thank all CoSA site Coordinators and their volunteers for all their work in supporting Core Members throughout the past year and for leading and supporting the work of CoSA across the country. I would also like to thank members of the Board of Directors of CoSA Canada, particularly the Executive Committee for their expertise, guidance and commitment to the work we do with Core Members.

In closing, I want to express my sincere gratitude to the Chair of the Board, Eileen Henderson. Eileen has been a constant support for me during the past year as we continue to face significant challenges in achieving sustainable and secure funding. I am always most grateful for her unwavering dedication and commitment to the work of CoSA.



Cliff Yumansky
Executive Director

Board Chair Annual Report

As I am writing this report, I am reflecting not only on this past year with CoSA Canada but also on the 30-year history of this work called Circles of Support and Accountability. Charlie's story has been told in many places, not only here in Canada but also internationally where it has had a significant impact. Charlie and Harry Nigh and a small community of people in Hamilton, along with Wray Budreo and Hugh Kirkegarrd, Dan Haley, Wendy Leaver and others in the Toronto area, paved the way for the work of Circles. What began as an innovative way of addressing community fear and re-integration has continued and expanded through the work of dedicated site staff, volunteers and core members who are committed to change across Canada. I am looking forward to hearing some of the voices of core members through the work that Sheila van den Heuval-Collins is working on as a way of acknowledging this milestone.

I am so appreciative of this incredible CoSA community and of all who have played a role in its 30-year history. They and you continue to make a difference not only in the lives of the core members but also in the lives of community members who are able to experience the ripple effects of "no one is disposable and no more victims".

This past year, we were encouraged by the request and invitation of the Restorative Justice Unit of the government of New Brunswick to see the work of CoSA re-ignited in that province. Through the hard work of Cliff Yumansky and government staff, Eden McAuley of Threshold Ministries has started the work of CoSA in Moncton.

We are midway through our funding for the pilot project on the use of virtual circles. Joy Steem and Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins continue to give leadership to this initiative. We are looking forward to hearing their recommendations over this coming year.

Heidi Illingworth has been working with us to build our awareness of the needs of victims and our capacity to engage with local victim services. Angeal Gates from the CoSA board has been working alongside Heidi and myself in developing resources that will be made available to sites in this coming year.

Through the work of Dr. Pamela Yates, the project centered on core member needs and strengths tool has been completed. Thank you to the site coordinators who participated in this initiative. The final report by Dr. Yates has been sent to the funding body and we are committed to ensuring that this tool will be available across the network.

The national office of CoSA is supported through funding from the federal government under the National Voluntary Organizations of Public Safety grant. We are grateful for this support and will reapply for this funding as soon as the call for proposals is issued. Our present agreement is in place until March 31, 2025.

Alongside Cliff, we have been working diligently in speaking about the work of CoSA across the country as we seek sustainable funding. As all of you know, this has not been an easy task, although we have had some encouraging glimmers of hope that keep us motivated. I want to acknowledge the support of Kevin Bosch is assisting us with making connections on a federal level.

This has been a year of transitions. Verona Singer, who has been a board member for a number of years, stepped away from the board due to health challenges. Susan Love transitioned from her role in Ottawa and Kathleen Weekmark has taken on the leadership of CoSA Ottawa. Maureen Donegan has shifted to a part time position with CoSA BC and Tina Gonzalez has taken on some of the leadership role in that community. Both Maureen and Susan have been members of the CoSA Canada board as site representatives and have worked diligently along with Ken Grahlman to ensure the voice

and needs of sites are heard at the board table. Susan stepped down from the board at the last AGM, but I am very pleased to report that she has agreed to let her name be put forward this year as a new board member. I am also pleased to say that Ken and Maureen are willing to continue as site reps even as they are deeply committed to their local areas. I am grateful for their time and the generous spirit that they bring to this work.

The announcement by MCC Ontario that they were closing the work in Toronto, Hamilton and Kitchener was a significant transition that has had far reaching impacts, not only on us at CoSA Canada but, more importantly, on the MCCO site coordinators, volunteers, core members and potential core members in that catchment area. We are very pleased that the work in Hamilton has been taken on by The St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton with Rick Pauw continuing to give leadership. We are also looking for partnerships in Toronto and Kitchener so that the good work that was being done there will be able to continue.

This work of CoSA is ongoing. We have a 30-year legacy, built on commitment, the power of relationships to bring change, and a vision of safer and healthier communities through the participation of community members. I continue to be committed to this work and am so grateful to be in the company of creative and committed individuals. Local site coordinators, their board members, volunteers and core members, all work hard on a day-to-day basis in and on behalf of their communities. They are the reason that we do this work.

I am also deeply appreciative of our CoSA Canada board members who provide governance and oversight to the work of the national office. Randy Klassen and Ben Levin as members of the executive provide welcomed input and wisdom and generously give of their time outside of board meetings. Carl Gritter works tirelessly at attending to all the financial details of CoSA Canada. Lastly, but certainly not least, is Cliff Yumansky whose direction, experience, leadership and commitment, both as an individual and in his role as Executive Director of this organization, continues to have a profound impact on all that we do. As chair of the board of CoSA Canada, it is a privilege to support Cliff and work alongside him as we advocate for CoSA.

Thank you again to all of you for your participation and commitment.



Eileen Henderson
Board Chair, CoSA Canada
September 2024

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

2023/2024

Board membership effective April 1st, 2023 to March 31st, 2024

Eileen Henderson	Chair
Randy Klassen	Treasurer
Ben Levin	Secretary
Laurent Champagne	Director
Maureen Donegan	Director
Florence Driedger	Director
Angela Gates	Director
Susan Love	Director

OUR PARTNER SITES

- **Catholic Justice Services Society**
  Vancouver/Fraser Valley, BC
- **Mennonite Central Committee Alberta**
  Calgary, AB
- **Parkland Restorative Justice**
  Prince Albert, SK
- **The Micah Mission**
  Saskatoon, SK
- **CoSA South Saskatchewan**
  Regina, SK
- **Initiatives for Just Communities**
  Winnipeg, MB
- **Mennonite Central Committee Ontario**
  Toronto/GTA, ON
- **One City Peterborough**
  Peterborough, ON
- **CoSA Ottawa**
  Ottawa, ON
- **Mouvement Communitas**
  Montréal, QC
- **Cercles de Soutien et de Responsabilité de Québec**
  Montréal, QC
- **Moncton Community Chaplaincy**
  Moncton, NB
- **Halifax Community Chaplaincy Society**
  Halifax, NS

STRATEGIC PLAN

November 29th, 2023

Vision Statement

We envision a society where there is less sexual harm through the dual principles of “no more victims” and “no one is disposable”.

Mission Statement

CoSA Canada collaborates with a national network of local CoSA sites to substantially reduce the risk of future sexual victimization by assisting individuals in their task of integrating into the community and leading a responsible, meaningful, and accountable life.

Key Strategic Focus Areas

1. Strategic Positioning of the Organization
2. Public Education/Marketing
3. Board Governance

Strategic Focus Areas & Strategic Goals and Initiatives

1. Strategic Positioning of the Organization

a. Goal: To build an effective and collaborative relationship between the national office and local sites.

i. Implement mechanisms for feedback and dialogue – in person and online, at Board, staff and volunteer levels.
ii. Organize annual meetings between the CoSA Canada, Board, and local sites.
iii. Assess gaps and provide support for local associations across the country.

b. Goal: Continue to support and develop the network across the country.

i. Help support current sites and potential new sites where there is a need to do so.
ii. Organize meetings with CoSA Canada and staff at local sites either quarterly or annually.
iii. Develop training and common standards across all local sites.
iv. Ensure CoSA sites are adequately represented on the Board.

c. Goal: Continue to liaise with federal and provincial governments, as well as National Associations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ), faith-based organizations and other allies to advocate for CoSA Canada’s strategic goals and financial sustainability.

i. Collaborate with local CoSA site leaders/staff to identify funding opportunities and work towards the goal of building a financially sustainable national organization and local sites.
ii. Create a standard ‘package’ of information about CoSA and the excellent results of the model, including a cost-benefit analysis.
iii. Identify and approach potential partners, including Indigenous partners for funding requests to government.
iv. Foster conversations around innovation in program delivery.

2. Public Education/Marketing

a. Goal: Expand public education efforts to ensure public understanding and awareness.

i. Complete and begin to implement a public education strategy with attention to key messages, audiences, potential allies, and communication modes.

ii. Engage partners and allies to support the organization in its media campaign.

b. Goal: Pursue alternative marketing and communication channels to support local sites and inform the community.

i. Involve sites in developing and implementing the public education strategy.

ii. Collaborate with victim services organizations who can advocate and provide support for CoSA Canada's goals.

c. Goal: Develop evidence-based policies.

i. Work with researchers to develop strong messages on evidence, including a cost-benefit and social analysis.

3. Board Governance

a. Goal: Engage local sites in building effective communication with the Board.

i. Consider different options to ensure representation and engagement of local sites in Board meetings and decision-making processes.

b. Goal: Continuously improve Board processes and governance.

i. Diversify Board membership.



CoSA Celebrates 30 Years

November 23rd, 2024

We celebrated the 30th Anniversary of Circles of Support and Accountability in Hamilton, Ontario on Saturday November 23rd, 2024. St. Leondard's Society of Hamilton generously provided the catering for this event.





We had speeches from Harry Nigh, Hugh Kirkegaard, Cliff Yumansky, Ryan Johnson, followed by a CoSA themed Trivia by Paul Tuck, then Eileen Henderson facilitated an Open Mic session.











We sang some songs and watched some videos from CoSA Ottawa (Susan Love & Garth Bulmer), Virtual CoSA (Joy Steem & Sheila van den Heuvel-Collins), CoSA BC (Tina Gonzalez), Circles UK (Riana Taylor), and CoSA Hamilton.















To watch the zoom broadcast, visit our youtube channel.