



## **A message from the Board of Directors**

The Nicola Valley Community Arts Council (NVCAC) has experienced substantial growth since 2020, starting with a move to the current location at 2051 Voght Street, beside Kekuli Cafe. Both community reach and programming have increased in leaps and bounds including the expansion of the artisan gift shop program to currently 40 artisans, increased volunteer involvement, and new course and class offerings.

As a board we acknowledge this was possible due to a wonderful group of passionate and dedicated volunteers and we want to ensure a path forward that supports our volunteers, increases outreach to other organizations for collaborations, and includes adequate funding so we can continue *Connecting Community Through The Arts*. While we appreciate the continued funding from the City of Merritt, TNRD, BC Arts Council, and the BC Gaming Commission, we want to put a special focus on our volunteers and membership so the NVCAC is truly powered by the people it serves.

This strategic plan was created to move forward with measured and sustainable growth and to formalize our vision, mission, guiding values, community voice, and target market. To successfully lead the NVCAC into a phase of sustainable growth, we are implementing an approach that addresses our challenges and sets a path forward that includes refining and updating existing systems, implementing new systems, and collecting information to develop future planning and strategies.

The Board of Directors of the Nicola Valley Community Arts Council

We acknowledge that we live, learn, and create on the traditional and unceded territory of the Nlaka'pamux and Silyx people.

*Adopted in June 2023 by the Board of Directors*

Mischelle Pierce – President  
Lynn Arnold-Cox – Vice President  
Barb Sayles – Treasurer  
Marilyn Kelly – Secretary  
Sarah Molnar – Director  
Kathy Kanda – Director  
Angela Ho – Director  
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## **Organizational Overview**

The Nicola Valley Community Arts Council (NVCAC) has been a non-profit society since its inception in 1982, and a registered Canadian charity since 1998. Starting out as a performing arts series with the Community Concert Series, the arts council evolved to include all expressions of art and creativity over the years.

The NVCAC has been in its current location, the historic Jackson Building at 2051 Voght Street in Merritt, since 2020. The facility includes an art gallery and gift shop, as well as several studio and maker spaces (The Studio and The Clubhouse). Programs include art shows, the artisan gift shop, a large variety of classes for community members of all ages, and a mobile Art in Motion unit to facilitate community outreach. After a pause during the pandemic, the NVCAC has also started rolling out their events program again, which includes community events in public spaces throughout the Nicola Valley, regularly scheduled groups like the Drum Connection, and performing arts events like Jazz in the Attic.

The Arts Council is currently supported by members, the City of Merritt, the BC Arts Council, the TNRD, and the Government of BC Gaming Commission.

## **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to be the centre of the creative arts in Merritt and the Nicola Valley. We encourage, exhibit, educate, and inspire art in all media. We work to create an environment for artistic expression, exploring cultural collaboration, and celebrating and supporting all art makers in the community.

## **Vision Statement**

We give everyone in the community a way to express themselves through the Arts.

## **Guiding Values**

Connection - Creativity - Collaboration

Connection - We value community above all else and foster connection and relationships within our diverse community by offering a place to belong.

Creativity - We broaden the idea of artistic and artisanal expression to be inclusive of the whole community; there is a way for everyone to express themselves.

Collaboration - We seek collaboration with other groups to broaden our reach and increase connection, creativity, and diversity in the community.

## **The Voice of the NVCAC**

We want to show up in the community and be perceived in the following ways:

welcoming - inspirational - inviting - enlightening - educational - vibrant - illuminating - lively - exploring - curious - enriching - thoughtful - warm - creative - connecting - encouraging - supportive - developing - friendly - respectful

## **The Market of the NVCAC**

We serve the diverse community of Merritt and the Nicola Valley, and invite everyone to express themselves through the Arts. We currently experience the most engagement with the following groups:

- People looking to expand and express their creativity
- People who create art and are looking to display their art and connect with other artists
- People who want to support local artists and artisans
- People who are looking for a balance to sporting events
- Tourists as well as visiting family and friends of locals
- People who are looking for “Things to Do” in Merritt and the Nicola Valley
- Parents of kids ages 5-12 who are looking for programming

## **Challenges of the NVCAC**

The biggest challenge is recruitment and retention of volunteers to keep our programs and facilities running. While we are fortunate to work with a robust base of volunteers, we want to ensure they do not get burnt out and we develop a sustainable plan for ongoing volunteer relations.

Another challenge is to ensure continuous funding for the NVCAC. While we continue to receive support from our long-standing sponsors, we also want to expand our membership base as well as our programs, to be able to demonstrate the value we bring to the community, for future grant applications. We also want to develop a plan for long-term financial sustainability.

The parts of the community we want to increase engagement with are youth 12-18 years old who are looking for programming and mentoring, and people who appreciate and enjoy the arts (as opposed to creating), and who are curious about the arts.

Spreading the word in the community, as well as keeping the enthusiasm for the arts and the community involvement and awareness going is also a challenge the NVCAC faces. This is being addressed by expanding outreach to include new collaborations, and adding new types of media to our communications.

## **Strategic Direction and Goals of the NVCAC**

The challenges of the NVCAC are shared by many non-profit organizations in Merritt and the Nicola Valley; for our organization they have been amplified by the substantial growth we have experienced since 2019 and a surge in a local focus during the pandemic. To successfully lead the NVCAC out of the pandemic and into sustainable growth, we are implementing a strategic approach that address our challenges and help us rise above them by refining and updating existing systems, implementing new systems, and collecting information to develop future planning and strategies.

The people who power the NVCAC are our biggest asset, from volunteers to staff, from program instructors to artists exhibiting in our art gallery shows, from members to our dedicated and

passionate Board of Directors. The goals based on our strategic direction must support this asset first and foremost, and ensure that they feel valued, and their talents are used in a way that supports their passions; we are committed to considering the dynamics of our network and making sure we work together in the best possible way.

**Goal: Create a system for recruitment and retention of volunteers.**

**Roadmap - prerequisite: Google Drive organization and maintenance**

- Establish Terms of Reference (TOR) for each working committee of the NVCAC
  - TOR for Communications Committee
  - Use Communications Committee TOR as template
  - TOR for Executive Committee
  - TOR for Finance Committee
  - TOR for Program Committee
  - TOR for Technology Committee
  - TOR for Volunteers & Membership Committee
  - TOR for Facilities Committee
  - TOR for Art Gallery
  - TOR for Artisan Gift Shop
- Identify potential new committees and establish TOR
  - Performing Arts
  - Art in Motion mobile unit
  - Financial Sustainability
- Refine existing committees - ensure that all committee chairs and members can work together in the best possible way
- Refine the volunteer brochure and create questionnaire for volunteer onboarding
- Create a list of most important volunteer positions to fill
- Create a data base for volunteer opportunities with short descriptions
  - Maintain on regular basis
- Create a data base for volunteers
  - Maintain on regular basis
- Create tutorials and training resources for volunteers
- Formalize a system for volunteer recognition, to keep volunteers connected and passionate

**Goal: Grow our programs and membership.**

**Roadmap**

- Facilities - invest to make more comfortable and welcoming during programs and classes
  - List of what is needed for each space (Clubhouse, Studio)
  - Call for donations of items
  - Obtain quotes for items that need to be purchased
  - Implement

- Count traffic (manually, as opposed to guest book entries) to be able to show visitor numbers more accurately
- Facility management - create scheduling system with available times to determine when additional programs could be offered
- Programs general - fill existing classes to capacity and expand from there
  - Advertising of individual classes and introduction of the teacher on social media and in the newsletter
  - Consider paid ads for low-enrolment classes in Merritt Morning Market or Merritt Herald, or paid social media ads
  - Survey membership (and the community) on ideal class times
  - Ask teachers to offer same class more than once, at different times
  - Monitor enrolment data to determine whether the Civic Centre should be used as facility (>12 ppl. In a class)
- Artisan Gift Shop - increase sales and profits 10-15% every year
  - Create new template for Artisan bios
  - Collect bio from all artisans
  - Display artisan bios in the gift shop
  - Feature each artisan in newsletter and on social media
  - Regular outreach to artisans for news and updates
  - Ensure the current commission structure covers all costs
- Arts in Motion Mobile Unit - prerequisite: committee and TOR established
  - Set goals for mobile unit (e.g. menu of art activities)
  - Set schedule for mobile unit
  - Find driver and confirm volunteer staffing
  - Create video of unit in action to promote
- Digital Arts program development - prerequisite: committee and TOR established
  - Connect with and get input from local talent
  - Develop list of equipment needed
  - Find suitable platform to develop
  - Develop plan to offer classes online or to host classes from collaborators
- Memberships - double membership in the next two years to 250 members
  - Have one consistent way to sign up for a membership
  - Create a list of benefits of being a member
  - Consider a system that auto-renews memberships
  - Offer an incentive when becoming a member
  - Hold regular draws for members (monthly/quarterly)
  - Advertise memberships regularly on social media and via the newsletter

***Goal: Work towards long-term financial sustainability for the NVCAC.***

### ***Roadmap***

- Identify potential streams of income independent of grant funding
  - Work with a local financial planner to gain an understanding of legacy donations as well as investment options for charities

- Explore expansion of corporate membership options and corporate sponsorship for events
- Develop an annual signature fundraising event with an online component for further reach

***Goal: Expand our communications and collaborations to better reach the community.***

***Roadmap***

- Website update to increase community engagement
  - Review platforms of current and former website and determine which will be more suitable to use moving forward
  - Implement suggestions of website audit (existing document)
- Expand types of media used to increase reach and keep community engaged
  - Use of video to showcase facilities, programs, art shows
  - Use of audio to enhance art shows (audio accessible via QR code)
- Expand outreach to surrounding communities and offer programs in collaboration with a local community liaison
  - Coldwater
  - Nooaitch
  - Shackan
  - Upper Nicola
  - Douglas Lake
  - Quilchena
  - Lower Nicola
  - Spences Bridge
- Expand outreach to surrounding arts councils and organizations for collaboration and cross-promotion
  - Logan Lake
  - Kamloops
  - Ashcroft
  - Lillooet
  - Princeton
  - Okanagan Valley
- Collaborate with the City of Merritt to deliver their art programs
  - Propose budget and deliverables
- Collaborate with the Theatre Society to operate the Performing Arts Centre

**Contact Info**

Nicola Valley Community Arts Council  
2051 Voght Street  
PO Box 92  
Merritt, BC V1K 1B8

Phone 250-378-6515

[www.nicolavalleyarts.com](http://www.nicolavalleyarts.com)  
[info@nicolavalleyarts.com](mailto:info@nicolavalleyarts.com)

Instagram and Facebook: @nicolavalleyartscouncil  
YouTube: @nicolavalleyarts4209

For media inquiries please contact our Communications Director at  
[media@nicolavalleyarts.com](mailto:media@nicolavalleyarts.com)