

Message from the Executive Director

This year has been one of continued growth, learning, and change for SWOVA, now known as The Circle.

Over the past year, we reviewed our organization and its work. The fruit of these efforts was a new 3-year strategic plan, aligned with an evaluation framework to monitor our progress. This work led us along the path of our organizational rebrand.

In support of our mission, we ran all three programs — Peace Kids, The Respect Project, and Pass It On — and, in partnership with IWAV, we held two community awareness events.

While COVID has had its challenges, the opportunity to pause and fortify our programs has been invaluable. In addition, we developed our facilitator training program. The first successful training was delivered via Zoom in April 2020 to a group of local participants and in June to educators in Barriere, BC.

As always, we are proud to be working with a skilled board, dedicated staff, and a growing number of partners. We are thankful to our funders and our donors for their faith and confidence in the work that we do.

Change is an important part of any organization. In the year to come, we'll continue to be attentive to the ways that we can evolve, knowing that without humility, flexibility, and openness, we risk failing to meet the ever-changing needs of the children and youth that we serve.

—Janine Fernandes-Hayden



EMPOWERING YOUTH
FOR A BETTER TOMORROW
Social • Emotional • Education

Thanks To Our Funders



Thanks To Our Supporters



Thanks to Our Allies & Partners

School District 64 Gulf Islands
Anti-Violence Society Barriere, BC
Island Women Against Violence
Volunteer Victoria
Salt Spring Island Community Services

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ANNUAL REPORT

2019-2020

VISION:

THE CIRCLE envisions inclusive and gender-equitable communities living violence-free.

MISSION:

THE CIRCLE fosters healthy relationships in order to promote communities free of violence, bullying, discrimination, assault and abuse.

THE CIRCLE does this by delivering innovative, evidence-based social-emotional educational programs for children, youth, and adults, and by inspiring and training others to deliver our programs.

OUR VALUES

CONNECTION: To seek opportunities for collaboration and effective partnerships that foster caring and belonging in communities.

RESPECT: To treat each other with consideration and dignity, fostering self-respect and respect for others.

COURAGE: To speak, act, and advocate for what is right, working for social justice and persevering against social injustice.

DIVERSITY: To include different voices and perspectives with an understanding and appreciation for all.

INNOVATION: To be flexible and responsive in addressing the unique and changing needs of the communities we serve.

Message from the Board Chair

Throughout the past year, we have focussed on sharing the story of the rebranding of our organization with our members, friends, partners and, finally, with the public. We told the story of the 2 years invested in laying the groundwork for our rebrand: producing new vision and mission statements, core values, and a new strategic plan. When our membership approved the society's new name this past February, SWOVA became The Circle. We had a new name, but, more importantly, The Circle was a renewed organization thoroughly prepared for the next decades of service to Salt Spring Island and beyond.

In pursuit of our goal of continuous improvement, the Board has made progress in developing our Policies and Procedures Manual, has conducted a Board self-assessment, and has recruited new members to serve on the Board.

I highly commend our Executive Director, Janine Fernandes-Hayden, for her creativity and hard work in leading the redesign of our program delivery in response to the demands of this year's pandemic.

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to chair the Board for the past 4.5 years. As I conclude my service on the Board, it's gratifying that the organization has a bright future and enjoys the very capable leadership of our Executive Director and the skills-rich Board of Directors.

—Sarah Belknap

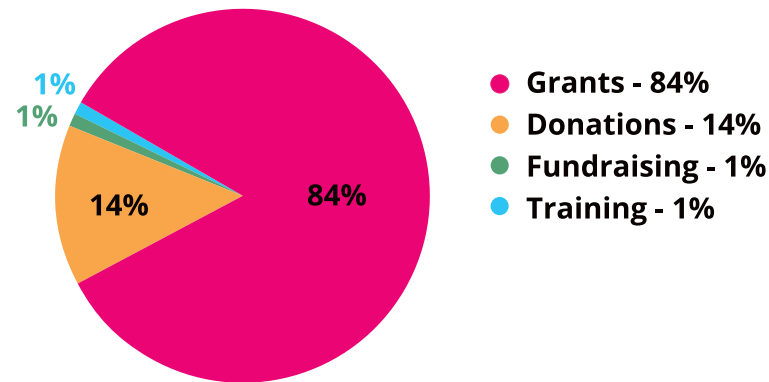
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sarah Belknap
James Cowan
Eric Dempster
Eric Ellis
Andrea Little
Bill Stedwill

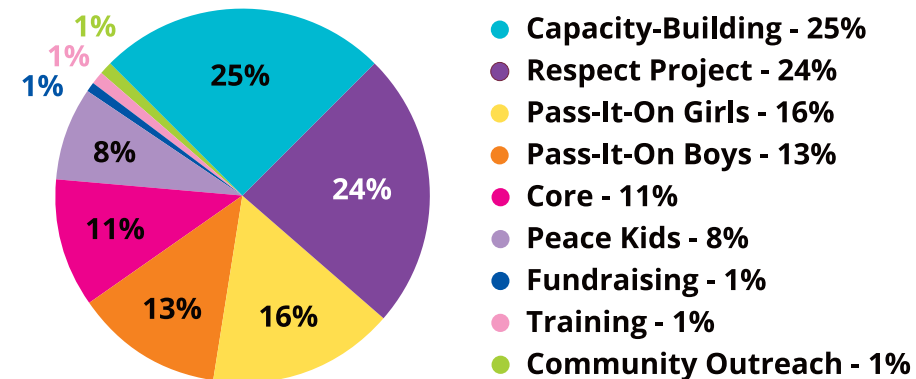
2019-2020 AT A GLANCE



THE CIRCLE REVENUES - \$193,840



THE CIRCLE EXPENSES - \$173,834



Our Offerings

Pass It On (PIO) is an after-school, cross-peer group mentorship program with intermediate students (as buddies) and high school students (as mentors). Its goal is to foster capacity for healthy relationships and support life transitions.

Young people need safe spaces to connect, to be vulnerable, to listen, and to be listened to without judgment. This simple act of meeting weekly, sharing deeply, and supporting those younger than them has a notable impact on all program participants.

Through the support of PIO, young people build confidence, self-awareness, empathy, acceptance of differences, and the ability to make better choices. The Circle offers two separate programs, one for boys and one for girls (cis, trans, and non-binary inclusive).

What We Heard from Students

"Pass It On is such a special program, and it really helped me throughout high school as well as transitioning from middle school to high school."

The Respect Project is an in-school program for Grades 6, 7, and 8 designed to offer students the opportunity to get to know one another better and learn about the foundational role respect plays in their lives.

Program goals are for students to a) understand and experience healthy, respectful relationships; b) become more aware of their own identify, feelings, and biases; c) develop verbal, nonverbal, and online communication skills and strategies to support respectful relationships.

Students are guided through a range of fun and engaging activities that introduce key concepts, and they are invited to share their opinions and ideas through small and large group discussions.

What We Heard from Teachers

"Students are kinder to each other and hang out in larger groups."

"Immediately, I saw openness and risk taking. Connection between students."

The Empathy Project provides students in Grades 3 to 5 with the building blocks of social-emotional learning, to help them understand the value of their own stories and the stories of those around them.

Through a variety of activities, discussions, and improvisational theatre games, students explore topics such as emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, fairness, friendship, and appreciation in a way that's collaborative, spontaneous, memorable, and fun.

The program aims to equip students with some of the tools they'll need to navigate the tricky waters of their middle school years, with the long-term goal of helping to produce young people who are attuned and responsive to the emotional needs of the people in their lives, including themselves.

Facilitator Training is a live virtual course where participants learn how to build relationships with youth, explore "heavy" topics with a playful tone, and give youth the skills they need to develop their own insight around these topics. Participants gain knowledge and practice with the signature facilitation tools and techniques that we use in our youth programs.

Community Events and Awareness

This year, we co-hosted two events: a community candlelight vigil to remember the 14 women killed in Montreal on December 6th, 1989, and to acknowledge the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence against Women. This annual event engages our youth, our partners, and the broader community and is well attended. Every March, The Circle celebrates International Women's Day with a community event aimed at recognizing the importance of this day.

