

healthartsociety
celebrating 20 years
2006-2026

2025 Impact Report



20 Years
of Music,
Connection,
and Care



Message from the Director

Angela Brooks

This year marks an important milestone for the Health Arts Society BC. For twenty years, we have witnessed the extraordinary power of music and the arts to connect people, evoke memories, and bring moments of joy to older adults throughout British Columbia.

What started in BC has grown into a national movement across Canada. Through our flagship program Concerts in Care and our expanding arts programs, we now reach thousands of older adults each year in care homes, hospitals, community centres, and supportive housing environments.

These performances and creative experiences offer more than entertainment; they foster belonging, dignity, and human connection. In a time when loneliness and social isolation are increasingly recognized as critical challenges for our population, the arts offer a deeply human response. Our programs bring people together, support caregivers, and create shared moments that remind us all of the importance of community.

None of this work would be possible without our musicians, partners, donors, volunteers, and team. Including an incredibly brilliant volunteer Board of Directors. Together, we are ensuring that seniors remain visible, valued, and connected through the transformative power of music and the arts.

HAS Year In-Review



451 live concerts delivered in British Columbia



Live music reached over **20,000 seniors** around the province



124 different professional musicians employed



Programs delivered in **93 different locations** across BC



Part of a national network reaching **118,000 seniors** in eight provinces



Two **musician appreciation** events held



Robust **strategic planning** initiative involving the entire board



Official relaunch of our Helena Choir kicked off with a co-design workshop



First intergenerational program launched, serving 180 participants

Why What We Do Matters

Loneliness and social isolation are increasingly recognized as major social determinants of health for older adults.



Across Canada, more than one in four seniors report feeling lonely, with even higher rates among those living alone or experiencing mobility challenges. Social isolation is linked to increased risk of depression, cognitive decline, cardiovascular disease, and early mortality.¹

Canada's population is aging rapidly, and social isolation among older adults is rising. About 43% of Canadians aged 50 and older are at risk of social isolation, and up to 57-59% report experiencing loneliness². At the same time, informal caregivers contribute billions of dollars in unpaid labour to the Canadian economy each year, yet many report high levels of stress and burnout. As the number of seniors grows and the struggle to keep pace, communities need preventative, community-based supports that strengthen wellbeing before crisis points are reached.

Health Arts Society programs respond directly to this challenge. Our programs also support caregivers and care staff, offering moments of respite and reflection in demanding environments.

In care homes, hospitals, and community settings alike, music becomes a bridge connecting generations, strengthening relationships, and affirming the dignity and humanity of older adults.

- 1 National Seniors Council. *Dialogue on Preventing Social Isolation and Loneliness and Promoting Social Connectedness in Canada*. Government of Canada.
- 2 National Institute on Ageing, Ageing in Canada Survey 2024

Music That Reconnects the Heart. A Health Arts Story:



At a recent concert, a resident approached a performer with tears in his eyes. Smiling warmly, he shared that the musician reminded him of his sister, whom he had not seen in many years.

Although the performer was not his sister, the music had sparked a powerful memory. For that moment, the resident was able to reconnect with a cherished part of his life.

Moments like this happen regularly at Health Arts Society performances. Music has a remarkable ability to evoke memories, emotions, and connections that words alone cannot reach. For residents, caregivers, and staff, concerts become more than performances. They become shared experiences of joy, reflection, and belonging reminding everyone present that meaningful human connection is always possible through the arts.

The People of Health Arts Society

Board of Directors



David Helliwell
Chair



David C. Cousins
Vice Chair



Anita Ghatak
Vice Chair



J. Michael Gallagher
Vice Chair



Janet Nixon
Treasurer



Heather Peets



Chantal J. F. Ryan



Gillian Smith



Hon. Lynn Smith



Sally R. Warren

We extend our sincere gratitude to Sylvia L'Ecuyer and Paul Mitchell-Banks as outgoing, longstanding Board members for their leadership, dedication, and lasting contributions to our organization.

Team



Angela Brooks
Managing Director



Róisín Adams
Artistic Director



Cindy Dai
Community Engagement & Programs Coordinator



Rodolfo Ribeiro
Finance Coordinator



“It all started 13 years ago in Wexford, Ireland when I offered Health Arts founder, David Lemon, a lift back to the Dublin airport. By the time we got there, I was the society’s newest board member.”

Dr. Michael (Mike) Gallagher is the longest serving member of the Health Arts Society Board of Directors.

Mike and his wife Kathy moved from San Francisco to Canada 25 years ago where he spent over a decade building one of Canada’s fastest growing clean energy tech companies. In retirement, they give back through philanthropic work centred on nature, music, and youth.

He stays active through playing softball and golf, and has competed internationally, including earning a bronze medal at the world Slow Pitch softball championships in Las Vegas.

Mike has been a lead donor supporting the revitalization of Health Arts’ Helena Choir for people with cognitive decline and their care partners. We are grateful for his contributions to Health Arts and the broader arts and sports communities.

Thank you to our Annual Supporters

Individual Donors

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Gladstone, Arlene
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Watt, Kerry & Darren Thompson
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Joan Blackman

Foundations & Corporations:



Government & Health Authorities:



Community Partners and Academics:



Help us make impact by joining our Community of Supporters

concertsincare.ca/british-columbia/donate/



Concerts in Care is the Health Arts Society's flagship program, bringing world-class live music directly into seniors' communities. Professional musicians perform in care homes, hospitals, adult day programs, retirement residences, and community centres, ensuring that seniors who may face mobility or health challenges can still experience live performance.

Since 2006, Concerts in Care has delivered thousands of concerts to hundreds of thousands of seniors across British Columbia. These performances feature a wide variety of musical genres, including classical, jazz, folk, world music, and musical theatre.

Beyond the music itself, these concerts create moments of connection. Residents reminisce, sing along, and share stories with one another. Caregivers and staff often report improved mood and engagement among participants long after the concert ends.

Through these performances, music becomes a powerful tool for connection, wellbeing, and dignity.

Artist Spotlight

Spotlight on Artists: Silk Road Duo

The eclectic Silk Road Duo, featuring Qiu Xia He and André Thibault, is as popular as ever and for very good reason. Their enormous index of songs spans from a multitude of cultures (Chinese, French-Canadian, Spanish and more) and languages (Mandarin, French, English, 'Ōlelo Hawai'i, Spanish and more). Having performed for Health Arts Society for over 18 years, they have perfected their stage presence to include dance, humour, openness and appreciation for many walks of life.



Silk Road Duo



Bella Fedrigo

Emerging Artist Bella Fedrigo

Bella Fedrigo graduated in Jazz Performance and Composition from Capilano University (2021 to 2025), studying under André Lachance and Jennifer Scott. She has performed at venues across the city, including Frankie's Jazz Club, Tyrant Studios, 2nd Floor Gastown, Hero's Welcome, and The Hot Deli, in both large and small ensembles. Bella also performs Concerts in Care with Dean Thiessen's "Charlie Brown Trio," a seasonal ensemble featured in December concerts.

Helena Choir



The Helena Choir is an inclusive choral program designed for people living with cognitive decline and their care partners. The choir brings participants together in a welcoming and supportive environment where everyone can experience the joy of singing.

More than just a musical program, the Helena Choir creates community. Participants build friendships, strengthen connections with their care partners, and rediscover the simple pleasure of making music together. 2025 marked the relaunch of this program after generous donors committed to 3 years of funding.

Artful Encounters



Artful Encounters is a participatory arts program that brings together music, visual art, storytelling, and movement to create engaging creative experiences for seniors.

Participants are invited to explore memories, imagination, and self-expression through guided artistic activities led by professional artists. Sessions are designed to be inclusive and adaptable, ensuring that individuals of varying abilities and cognitive levels can participate meaningfully.

Artful Encounters reflects Health Arts Society's commitment to expanding beyond performance-based programming toward more interactive and participatory arts experiences that deepen engagement and foster creativity in seniors' communities.

Creative Connections



Creative Connections is an intergenerational program that brings seniors together with elementary school students for shared creative experiences.

Developed in collaboration with community partners, the program combines artmaking and music to create meaningful opportunities for connection between generations.

These exchanges challenge stereotypes about aging and create space for mutual understanding and respect. Creative Connections demonstrates how the arts can serve as a powerful bridge between generations, strengthening community relationships and celebrating the value that each generation brings to society. Each generation brings to society.

Highlights of 2025



Fall Fundraiser was a memorable evening among friends, raising over \$75,000 in support of our programs and featuring renowned musicians Jane Coop and Joan Blackman.

healthartsociety
Strategic Plan Overview
(2025 - 2028)

Vision: Every older adult in BC, regardless of location or circumstance, has access to high-quality artistic experiences that bring joy, dignity, and connection across generations.

Strategic Pillar One: Build a Scalable & Sustainable Organization

What: Strengthen our foundation, operations, governance, fundraising, and marketing to support growth while increasing impact per dollar spent.
How: High-Level Deliverables: Recruit and structure a core team; implement modern systems, formalize policies and governance; expand partnerships and fundraising capacity.
When: 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029
TEST & LEARN CORE TEAM & NATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS CAMPAIGNS IN PLACE AND LEGACY GIVING

Strategic Pillar Two: Optimize Concerts in Care

What: Enhance efficiency, expand reach, and uphold artistic excellence while adapting for diverse communities.
How: High-Level Deliverables: Improve concert delivery efficiency, relaunch remote programming, refresh artist onboarding, strengthen health authority partnerships, and expand storytelling integration.
When: 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029
EFFICIENCY MAPPING RELAUNCH REMOTE PROGRAMS PROVINCE-WIDE REACH AND MENTORSHIPS

Strategic Pillar One: Pilot & Scale Participatory Arts Programs

What: Develop participatory arts experiences engaging seniors, caregivers, and intergenerational communities.
How: High-Level Deliverables: Launch 1-3 pilot projects; establish co-design model; expand Helena Choir; scale successful models; achieve 10x reach at lower cost; secure long-term funding.
When: 2025 2026 2027 2028 2029
PILOT & EVALUATE SCALE PROVEN MODELS PROVINCE-WIDE EXPANSION

Implementation & Accountability: Annual budgets and workplans align directly with these pillars. Progress will be reviewed quarterly by the Board and Executive Director, tracking growth in impact, partnerships, and fundraising performance.

A strategic planning initiative shaped by full board leadership and participation.



Looking Forward

As Canada's population ages, the need for meaningful social and cultural engagement among older adults continues to grow.

Health Arts Society is committed to expanding access to arts programming for seniors living in care settings and within the community. Future priorities include growing

participatory arts programs, strengthening intergenerational initiatives, and reaching seniors who are aging in place and may be experiencing isolation.

By continuing to invest in partnerships, artist training, and community outreach, the organization aims to ensure that more seniors across British Columbia can experience the joy, connection, and wellbeing that the arts provide.

Together with our supporters and partners, we look forward to building the next chapter of this national movement.



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