

PROMISING PRACTICES



Private sector and government partnerships build community housing

The profile of a group home resident has changed in recent years. Today's residents with disabilities often have complex care issues, and their options to live independently in the community are limited. Without care support in a group home, these individuals likely would end up in an institutionalized setting.

[Vancouver Resource Society](#) (VRS) creatively fills the need for residential living for persons with a wide range of disabilities. The organization owns twenty homes and units in eight residential buildings throughout greater Vancouver and Victoria.

To ensure a safe and comfortable environment for the persons served, VRS employs many types of adaptive equipment in its homes:

- Communication devices such as headsets, telephone devices for persons who are deaf, head mice, environmental switches, alternative computer keyboards, and voice recognition computer devices.
- Weigh scales for ceiling tracks.
- Standing frames.
- Trapeze bars and accessories.
- Tilt tables.
- Walkers, canes, and scooters.
- Adapted exercise machines.
- Tactile and therapeutic toys for children.
- Chair lifts and accessories.
- Grab bars and shower rails.

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About the ECS Promising Practices newsletter series

An organization receiving exemplary recognition in its CARF survey report stands out because of its professional and strategic response to a service or business need. CARF presents these ECS Promising Practices articles to encourage dialogue among service providers and to offer examples of creative solutions for improving service quality.

Find current and past issues of ECS Promising Practices at:
www.carf.org/ecspromisingpractices

Issues are categorized by topic: Business Practices, Community Services, and Employment Services.

- Alternating pressure and flotation pads for the care and prevention of bed sores.
- Self-levelling swivel utensils and utensil hand clips.
- Portable prone standers with accessories designed for standing therapy exercises.
- Chairs with lifting mechanisms.
- Raised toilet seats.
- Reaching aids such as light-switch extension handles.

The organization's last [CARE](#) survey report commended VRS for being "progressive in planning for the future needs of the persons served as exemplified by being a community leader in the development of various types of accessible community living options."

VRS often collaborates with other companies and agencies to carry out its goals. Two recent projects illustrate VRS partnerships with the private sector and government:

- After having to close a group home because it needed major accessibility upgrades, VRS replaced the home with a newly built one, custom fitted for the accessibility needs of the persons served.

VRS enlisted the support of the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association of B.C. to engage one of its member companies for the home's construction. Then VRS negotiated a contract with Community Living B.C. to shoulder the costs for care that individuals would need in the new home.

The result is a state-of-the-art, accessible home for five medically fragile young adults in a safe and vibrant neighbourhood, allowing the residents to integrate and maximize their independence in the community. With the VRS contribution to the project, Vancouver Coastal Health now has additional housing available for persons who can most benefit from this model of residential living.

- When a developer sought re-zoning for a proposed residential-commercial tower in the City of North Vancouver, officials in the city's planning department brought the project to VRS for its ideas. VRS was experienced in working with developers and municipalities to achieve a social housing requirement of new building projects and re-zoning proposals.

In exchange for the city's permission for the developer to build with higher density, VRS was awarded five

residential units in the building as homes for persons with significant disabilities. This particular kind of an integrated apartment—which provides 24-hour care support—had not previously existed in the city of North Vancouver. Construction on the new building is set to begin this year.

Although these two projects were quite different, both illustrate VRS's business practice of planning for the needs of the persons served so they can live as independently as possible in their own communities. As the [CARE](#) survey report noted, "VRS has attained a high level of integrity and continuity of services while balancing the expectations of persons served and other stakeholders."

Below: An artist's rendering of the residential-commercial tower in the City of North Vancouver.



For more information about the Vancouver Resource Society, contact Murray Hamilton, director, Public Relations, at murray@vrs.org or (604) 731-1020, extension 209. The VRS website is at vrs.org.

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