



## **NELSON AT ITS BEST CHAIR REPORT 2018**

### **Name change**

In 2018 SPAN made the decision to strategically change our name — to something that still captures the goals and essence of social planning but with the strengthened capacity to better foster an accurate public understanding and embrace of it. So we are changing the network’s name from SPAN Nelson to ***Nelson at its Best***.

It was chosen because it is positive, simple to understand, points to common ground, and is easy to embrace across sectors and perspectives.

For these same reasons, we feel *Nelson at its Best* is a better name for reflecting the overall community goal that is at the heart of social planning, that is, to look at social planning and development through the lens of well-being and quality of life for everyone.

Further, and just as importantly, the new name more effectively encapsulates and stresses our common community interests, which will help build the multi-sector approach needed to strengthen well-being in Nelson. In order for our network to expand and deepen its work, we need greater understanding and buy-in.

We managed to obtain enough funding to hire a Nelson at its Best overall Coordinator for five hours per week, the first time in many years that we have been able to have a staff person in place.

### **End Poverty Initiative – *Voices of Change* project**

With a significant grant from Columbia Basin Trust, End Poverty Initiative is now moving forward with the *Voices for Change* project. It has the overall objectives of increasing resources and benefits into the hands of people experiencing poverty, generating skills building opportunities, and connecting economically vulnerable people and supporting their participation in community initiatives.

The project is comprised of three sub-projects to meet these objectives:

1. Community Cafes for low-income parents, which aims to improve low-income children's well-being by improving supports to parents. Nelson has a very high rate of child poverty, at about 21%, higher than the national rate. The cafes are

gatherings where parents are paid a stipend for their time. The cafes allow time for people to consider what would support them to alleviate the effects of poverty. In the cafes, people have respite from daily stresses, create relationships and networks, develop new skills, and learn about services and benefits that may be available to them. Some financial support is available for people to take on small initiatives or training.

2. Youth Financial Literacy project seeks to immediately improve youths financial well-being, enhance money-management skills and help them develop a plan for the future and launch it through appropriate skills development. Youth participating in the program are paid a monthly stipend for their participation, their help in developing a Youth Financial Literacy curriculum as well as to apply skills they learn.
3. Benefits Incubator project works to increase resources in the hands of low-income employees by creating a bridge between employees and business. The project involves creating a catalogue of innovative alternative or non-conventional benefits that employers could use to help increase resources in the hands of low-income employees. The project seeks to increase awareness of best practices already existing and develop further ideas, and have employers work with employees to trial some of these ideas. The catalogue ultimately will be available to all employers to consider affordable ways to increase resources to their staff.

### **Volunteer Hub project**

After having completed a feasibility study in 2016-17 to assess a model for creating a sustainable hub, we are now entering the second phase of the project, namely to build a solid business plan and secure the necessary partnerships.

We have received some funds toward this, but we are still awaiting news on a grant that will complete the needed funds, which we hope to hear about in Dec-Jan.

### **Oct 4 'Candi-dating and Election Forum'**

With the large number of candidates (23), we determined the reverse forum format used in the past was too unwieldy for this election event. Instead, following on a speed dating format used by Nelson Public Library in 2014, we put together a two part event: a 12-round 'candi-dating' with all of the candidates; and a collected group question and answer session.

The 1:1 candidate-voter aspect went very well, with both candidates and voters appreciating the more private time. With each round, other voters were permitted to observe the 1:1 conversation.

We designed five questions for the candidates, who were chosen at random to answer them. In the future we would look to having more questions.