

2019-20 ANNUAL REPORT

Circles of
Support and
Accountability
Canada



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CHAIRPERSON'S REMARKS

The past year has been both an exciting and surprising one in the life of CoSA Canada.

Last October we had a successful national CoSA gathering in Canmore, Alberta where Harry Nigh was recognized for his pioneering work with the first circle in 1994 and as co-founder of CoSA.

In early March we were pleased to hear from Public Safety with the confirmation that CoSA Canada would be the recipient of a sustaining grant for our national office. Around the same time, we entered into talks with the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University to hold a symposium on the legislation related to sexual offending and how it is applied in the courts.

The work of CoSA Canada continued to evolve until late March when all of us began to live through a pandemic. Our national staff began to work from home as public health requirements imposed social distancing and limited engagement with people outside of small family units on us all. These restrictions also led many local CoSA initiatives to adapt to reliance on telephone and video connections within circles. Some became "Zoomers" and others took advantage of relaxed restrictions to hold outdoor circle meetings at a safe distance from one another. The prolonged nature of COVID-19 continues to be a challenge for our local partners, volunteers and core members. The board has continued to meet by video conference through this period forgoing the annual face-to-face meeting normally held in June in Ottawa. It remains unclear when we might be able to meet again in person.

Through the initial COVID-19 Period, from April until July we held weekly meetings of an Ad Hoc Advisory Group to monitor the impact of the pandemic on the work of CoSA and be prepared to advise the board on responses. I continue to be impressed by the creativity of our partners in keeping the work of CoSA going and their continued commitment amid these days.

On a personal note, at the AGM I will step away from the board and will not be able to serve as past president for personal reasons. Bo Gajda has graciously offered to serve in that advisory role on the board for the next year. It was been a privilege to serve the Board of CoSA Canada through this formative period in its emergence as a new national organization in the field of criminal justice and to serve as board chair in particular. It has been wonderful to work with such a dedicated group of directors and national staff. I look forward to seeing the organization continue to grow in the coming years and I remain committed to supporting this important work of building restorative communities with core members and volunteers.

Hugh Kirkegaard
Board Chair

WORDS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we look back on another year at CoSA Canada we first and foremost acknowledge all of the hard work and continued dedication of staff, volunteers and core members across the country.

There are significant challenges ahead, as we look towards the end of the CoSA National Capacity Project (CNCP) funding in 2022. It is important to take this time to reflect on how far we have come. Over the past three years, the work of CoSA across the country has been strengthened through the connections we have made. This network has demonstrated how much stronger we are together. Through the work of the Good Practice Working Group and all of the site staff who have contributed, we have begun to develop several central documents. These foundational documents represent another important step in the strengthening of the work of CoSA in Canada.

This year also marked the 25th Anniversary of CoSA this year. We held a small celebration in Canmore, Alberta to mark this milestone. It was an opportunity to reflect on how much CoSA has grown and included remarks from those involved in the early work of circles. CoSA Canada was also honoured to present the inaugural CoSA Canada Award of Distinction to Rev. Harry Nigh. As one of the founders of the CoSA model, we were so fortunate to hear his reflections on the early years of CoSA. As we look forward to the future of CoSA Canada, it is so important to recognize the innovative roots of the work.

This work would not be possible without the tremendous efforts of the CoSA Canada staff: Lisa Joly, Nikki McCarthy and Sandie Lessard. We are also grateful for the ongoing support of the Board of Directors. In particular, I want to thank Hugh Kirkegaard for his work on behalf of CoSA Canada over the past several years. As Board Chair, your commitment to ensuring strong leadership for CoSA during this critical time has been so important.

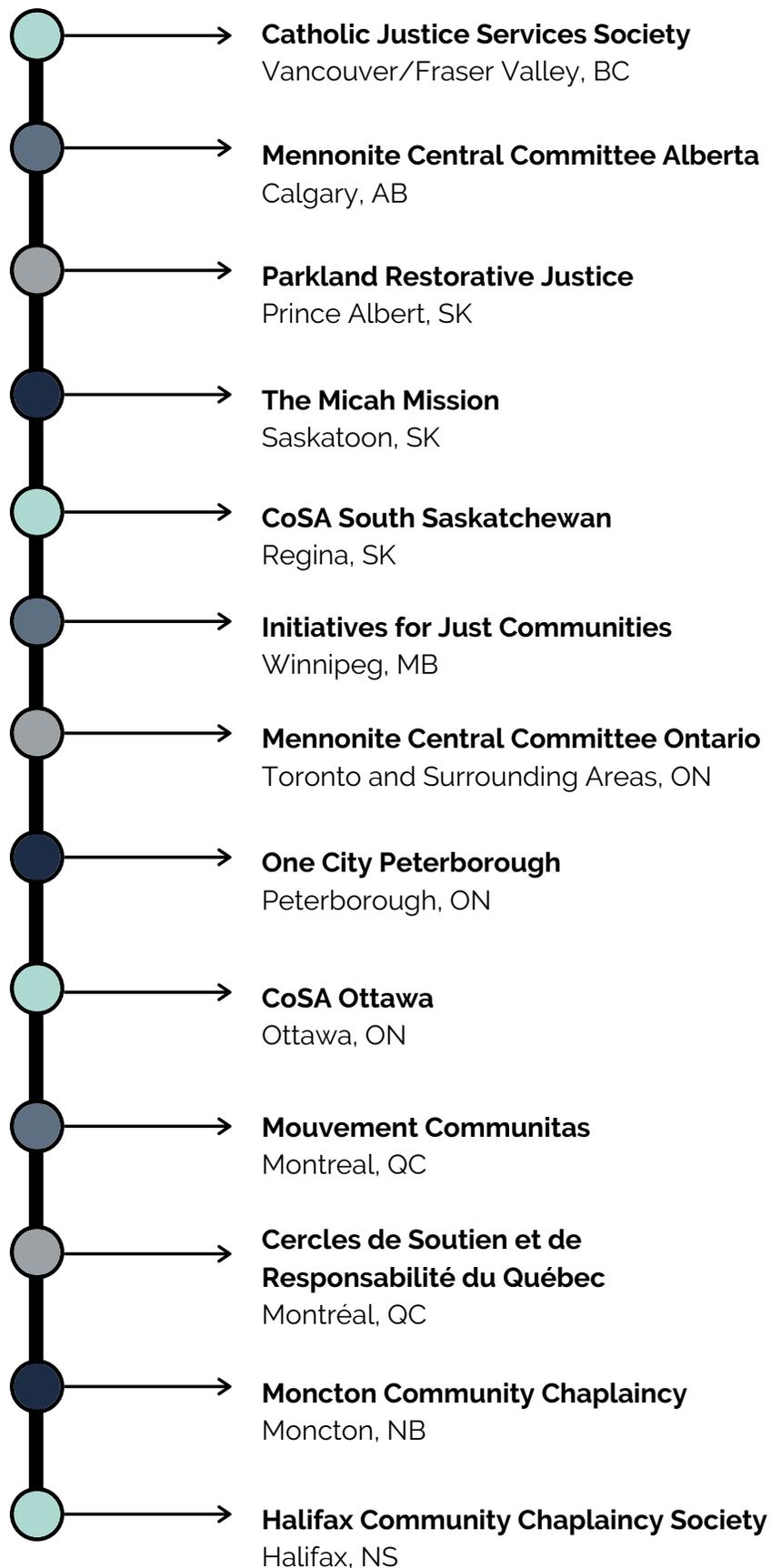
It has been a great year, with so much to celebrate. As we begin a new one, I look forward to continuing work with our network of CoSA sites, government and community partners to continue pursuing the vision of *No More Victims* and *No One is Disposable*.

Kathryn Bliss
Executive Director

COSA CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board membership effective April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020

Hugh Kirkegaard	<i>Chair</i>
Eileen Henderson	<i>Vice-Chair</i>
David Byrne	<i>Past-Chair & Treasurer</i>
Daniel Genest	<i>Director</i>
Bogumil Gajda	<i>Director</i>
Florence Driedger	<i>Director</i>
Françoise Crabalona	<i>Director</i>
Maureen Donegan	<i>Director</i>
Susan Love	<i>Director</i>
Verona Singer	<i>Director</i>
Wayne Northey	<i>Director</i>



OUR PARTNER SITES

COSA NATIONAL CAPACITY PROJECT: ANNUAL UPDATE

CoSA Canada continues to collaborate extensively with site staff and to exchange current and up to date learning and knowledge with partners in the domestic and international restorative justice sectors to articulate and collectively align good practice. With the development of content underway and the valuable practical insights among staff working with CoSA programs around the country, CoSA Canada is on track to produce the mandated deliverables of a Volunteer Handbook and a Good Practice Manual within the project timeline and to ensure that all staff can apply these in their work.

Recognizing that sites are interested in leading their own training programs over time but that there are essential topics that should be dealt with at all trainings, CoSA Canada and site staff have committed to continue sharing relevant current tools, information and resources for training new staff and volunteers on those core matters. Our gratitude goes to all site staff and to other partners working with us for their interest and efforts in sharing current knowledge, expertise, anecdotes, contacts in various fields, and many other resources so that CoSA Canada can achieve the best possible outcomes in its work.

2019 NATIONAL GATHERING

The National Gathering is a time for CoSA sites to come together to build and nurture relationships, continue to exchange information, knowledge and ideas related to good practice, and generally grow CoSA together. The 2019 National Gathering was held in Canmore, Alberta, as we celebrated 25 years of CoSA work by looking at changes in volunteer demographics and exploring volunteer practice aspects, and allowed this to be the overall focus of the gathering.

The 2019 National Gathering began with CoSA Canada's Kathryn Bliss welcoming participants, sharing her perspective on the past year and national objectives for the coming one, and emphasized her hope that sites would draw value from the precious time together.

Sites were then led by Natalia Ilyniak of Initiatives for Just Communities and Seth Michael of Parkland Restorative Justice in a session on evolving volunteer demographics. The presenters utilized experiences and data from their sites, as well as database information provided by other sites, and contrasted this with broad non-profit environment data. This excellent presentation highlighted the shifting dynamics of CoSA. Volunteers and sites then participated in rotating table conversations around recruiting, supporting and overseeing volunteers from a range of cultural, age-based and ability-based demographics during this session. Many insights and ideas emerged from these discussions.

Following the sharing out of the article, "Gains and Drains for CoSA Volunteers" earlier this year with sites, Adriana Appleton of the Micah Mission presented her reflections about the article and her experience in managing and supporting volunteers. In the next session, attendees participated in six site-generated, volunteer-related topic discussions. They included ways of improving on circle reporting by volunteers, approaches to integrating new volunteers into an established circle, ways of ending a volunteer's time at a site when this becomes necessary, managing changing circle dynamics after a breach or other temporary/extended absence by a core member, supporting a circle that is working with a core member with mental health challenges, and volunteer appreciation.

Following this, Lisa Joly shared updates on the inputs of the Good Practice Working Group over the prior year which had focused, at the request of sites, on volunteer management and practice. Insights and learning had been extensively gained with the support of the Working Group, from many inputs from sites at regional meetings, from a comprehensive online survey early in the calendar year and review of existing site resources, and through many conversations and other forms of communication over the year, adding to the knowledge that had been shared over the past 2.5 years.

Maureen Donegan from the Catholic Justice Services Society and Susan Love from CoSA Ottawa then each shared a case example highlighting a context in which boundaries came into play and actions needed to be taken toward resolving complex outcomes. Sites were then invited to discuss four complex scenarios at length that trigger issues around boundaries, safety and liability, applying the new volunteer code of conduct in their considerations.

The following day, sites were asked to consider what constitutes a "good life" for a core member. Rod Friesen from MCC Ontario then shared an overview of the Good Lives Model (GLM). His presentation addressed the value of the GLM in providing a strengths-based, practical framework within which to talk about the range of life experiences, goals, priorities, and values of a core member. Site staff later participated in a circle exercise using the above goals to guide them in practicing conversation focused on this framework.



A presentation was subsequently held by Hugh Kung, Correctional Programs Officer with the Calgary Area Parole Office of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC), regarding CSC's use of the GLM beginning in recent years. He highlighted the value and use of the model in working with past offenders now in the community, from his perspective in the role of delivering programming that engages the Good Lives model.

As a follow-up, Kathryn Bliss shared her thoughts around the importance of supporting volunteers with practical tools for facilitating focused circle discussions, particularly where relationships are still to be built or there is a need to better anchor and direct the circle's discussions, and value in intentional and thoughtful planning for each circle. Site staff then discussed the question of how they help volunteers to structure Circle conversations and build rapport with core members.

Compassion Cards were presented by Carol O'Neil, as a means of introducing more compassionate language and perspectives into the circle conversation. Components of a Circle were presented by Maureen Donegan and Linnea Groom and provided volunteers with a structured question/topic sheet which helps them to better understand and articulate aspects of support and accountability. A worksheet on the Use of Leisure Time was presented by Rod Friesen, Rick Pauw and David Blow as an approach for strategizing creative leisure time for core members, taking the concept of substitutability as a guide for choosing meaningful and safe activities for each person.

Dr. Diane Crocker then provided an overview of the past year's work via Zoom, sharing updates about the use of data, her experiences in meeting with site staff and volunteers, and development of the next Annual Evaluation Report. Dr. Crocker advised that the CNCP seemed on track in reaching its goals and was joined by a member of her team, Dr. Jay Healey who stated that the database was providing him with needed information for proceeding with statistical analysis.

Gerald Oleman was then invited to the gathering by CoSA Canada as an elder and member of the St'at'imc (Stat-lee-um) Nation from Shalalth British Columbia. Gerald spoke about his life's journey, insights and learning through many years of healing. Gerald's reflections provided an important perspective and vision for healing and social and cultural shifts in Canadian society.

In closing, CoSA Canada thanked all present for sharing their knowledge and experience, and for the intentionality and building of deeper connections throughout our short time together.

Volunteers play an integral role in the CoSA community. Here are a few examples of what volunteers have shared about their experiences...

We got to know the good, bad, and ugly of our core member and we stuck by him.

As volunteers we get to model healthy, pro-social lifestyles.

I will never regret my decision to join CoSA

Our core member has told us that our circle and the volunteers in it have given him something he has never had before - hope for a bright future.

I am helping to keep my community safe

Our core member recently went through a really difficult transition and I can not imagine how he might have coped had he not had CoSA. Our circle provided a safe space for him to process his thoughts and feelings, and kept him accountable. I know it made all the difference.

In our circle we're not afraid to ask the hard questions

I love being part of CoSA, my core member is the only person I know who never fails to ask how I'm doing.

COSA CANADA'S 25TH ANNIVERSARY

To commemorate the 25th anniversary of the first circle of support and accountability, CoSA Canada hosted a celebration at the 2019 National CoSA Canada Gathering held in Canmore, Alberta. This event took place on October 16th, 2019, and gathered as part of the CoSA network's annual meetings. The evening was a time for all to celebrate the work that had been accomplished over the years, and also to give thanks to those who had not only believed in the vision of compassion, understanding, and community safety but also for those who helped spearhead a movement that is now regarded internationally for its ability to help those who have offended, as well as to keep communities safe.



In 1994, upon the release of an individual who had committed several sexual offences in Hamilton, Ontario, a group of community members and professionals rallied and created the first “circle of support and accountability”. This first circle created the groundwork for what was eventually to become a national restorative justice-based organization to help those who have committed sexual offences return to communities safely. Twenty-five years later, this organization, now known as Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) Canada has 14 partner sites across the country, more than 100 core members, and hundreds of volunteers. To say that CoSA has grown and evolved over the years is undeniable, as is the importance of the early days where a simple idea and a lot of hard work could build an entirely new approach to managing those who had committed sexual offences in the community.

This celebration marked a wonderful milestone for CoSA in Canada and was therefore the perfect occasion to present the inaugural CoSA Canada Award of Distinction. The purpose of the award, created in honour of long time CoSA volunteers Les Horne and Malcom Savage, is to celebrate those who have made significant contributions to the work of CoSA in Canada and a way of acknowledging those who saw the vision long before it became the national network that it is today. CoSA Canada was honoured to present the first award to Harry Nigh, who was paramount in establishing not only the first circle in 1994 but who continues to represent the strong values, passion and commitment that underlie the work of CoSA in Canada.

Congratulations, Harry!



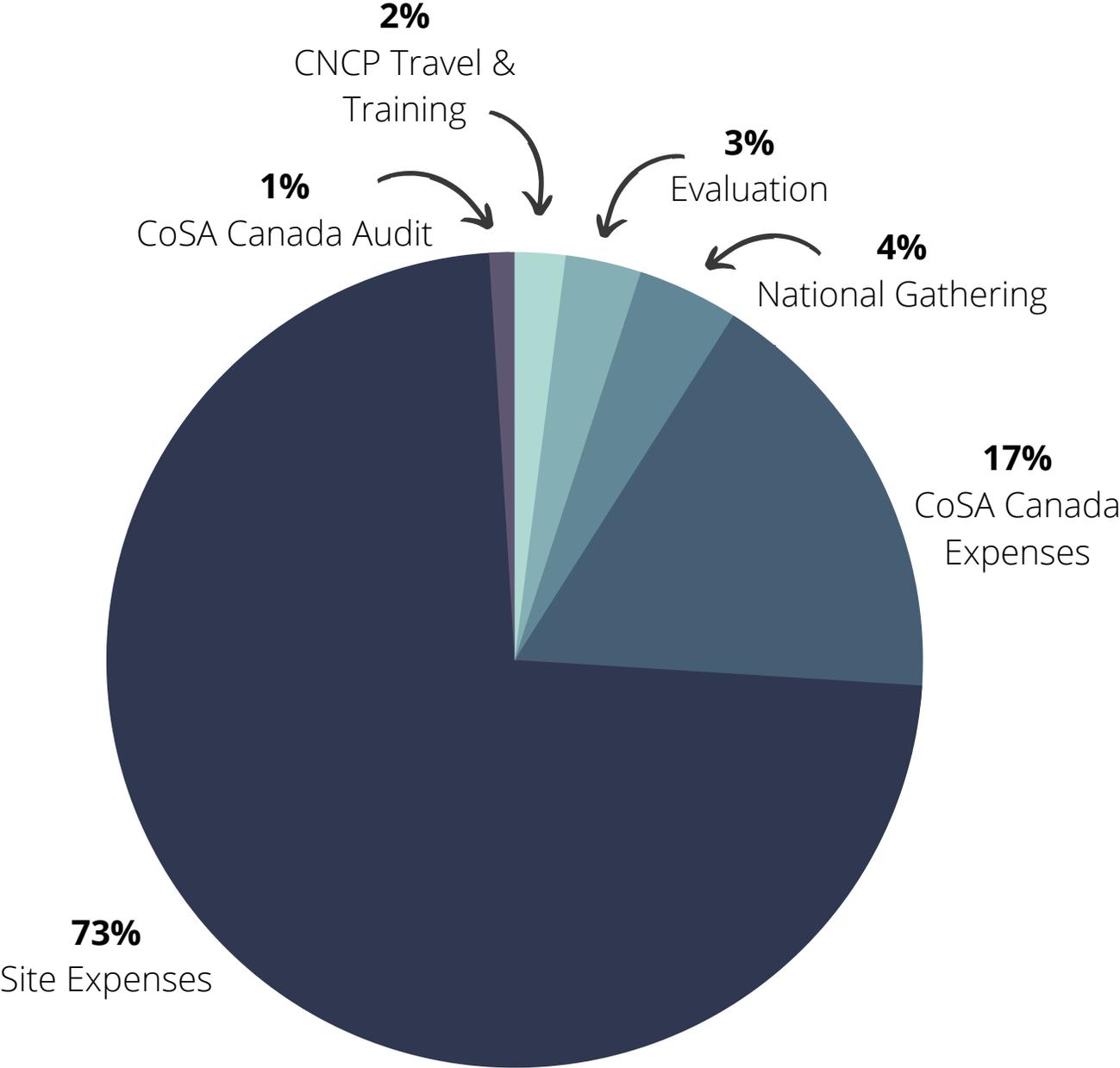
FINANCES: AUDITED STATEMENTS

COSA CANADA INC

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2020

	2020	2019
REVENUE		
Government grants	\$ 1,497,166	\$ 1,499,616
In-kind contributions (Schedule A)	173,238	195,362
	1,670,404	1,694,978
EXPENDITURE		
Administrative expenses	16,638	24,588
Audit and evaluation	47,875	45,789
Computer and library services	1,971	15,022
Consultants and experts	9,015	13,272
In-kind expenses (Schedule A)	173,335	195,362
Insurance - building	2,642	637
Insurance - liability	5,279	5,391
Office	9,899	5,911
Rent	70,777	70,152
Salaries and wages	1,160,445	1,164,013
Supplies	6,817	6,668
Technical and specialized services	30,943	25,605
Training and project development	77,361	62,307
Travel and living expenses	57,505	60,494
	1,670,502	1,695,211
NET EXPENDITURE FOR THE YEAR	\$ (98)	\$ (233)

FINANCES: NATIONAL BUDGET BREAKDOWN



We would like to acknowledge the financial support received from Public Safety Canada through the National Crime Prevention Strategy.

A special thank you to all of those who have supported CoSA over the years and to those who continue to share our commitment to making a difference in communities across Canada. We are so grateful.

THANK
YOU



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