



ANNUAL REPORT 2015

BOARD MEMBERS:

Charles Troger	Chair
Brent Wasserman	Vice Chair
Peter Weng	Treasurer
Lauren Salim	Secretary
Andy Robertson	Member

ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEMBER:

Nancy Troger	Office Manager
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CONTRACTOR STAFF MEMBERS:

Shauna Janz	Executive Director
David Segal	Program Director
Will Bratt	Program Facilitator

VISION: *Learning Through Loss* designs and delivers grief and loss education and supportive programs to youth, and promotes awareness in the community about the importance of supporting young people through loss.

MISSION: We envision a community where all youth have access to education, support, and resources relating to grief and loss.

VALUE STATEMENTS

Grief occurs throughout our lives due to a variety of losses. Healing from those losses is a process, not an event.

- **Hope** – We provide hope to youth, their families and community members who are experiencing grief and loss.
- **Healing education** – We provide appropriate, professional resources to youth, their families and community members to live, learn and heal through their losses.
- **Community** – We work collaboratively with our community partners to support youth experiencing grief and loss.

- **Ethical** – We serve youth, their families and community members with integrity, professionalism, accountability and excellence.

1. OBSERVATIONS FROM THE CHAIR

2015 has been another interesting, challenging and rewarding year for **LTL**.

LTL continues to provide a vital service to the youth and youth-serving professionals in the Greater Victoria area. As with any small non-profit organization we face challenges of modest funding and limited administrative support.

We are always pursuing qualified board members who share our enthusiasm for **LTL** and who can commit time and energy to our mission and vision. We are being thoughtful in this pursuit, realizing the importance of adding members who can provide stability as well as an ongoing contribution. This year saw the loss of our treasurer, Peter Weng, to an overseas posting. We thank him for his contribution.

Stable funding is an annual challenge. We continue to benefit from the dedicated support of a number of key organizations. **LTL** has remained focused on maintaining and enhancing a board that can manage the ongoing administrative and operational tasks. For years **LTL** has recognized the risks of running an extremely lean organization with minimal overheads and fixed costs by depending heavily on a working volunteer board. The challenge with this model is the dependence upon stable volunteer support and loss of knowledge associated with attrition. In response to this identified risk, in 2015, **LTL** took steps to transfer many formerly volunteer tasks to a paid, contract, Executive Director, Shauna Janz. Shauna brings a wealth of experience and knowledge of both the clinical and administrative sides of our operations. Although funding this position can be challenging, the success of the transition of tasks from board to ED has proven the efficacy of this model in securing **LTL**'s future.

LTL is supported by a strong facilitator team. Our core facilitation team continues to be Shauna Janz, MA; David Segal, MA, RCC; and Will Bratt, MA, CCC. Shauna fills the dual role of Grief Education Program Director and Facilitator Team Lead; Dave fills the role of Learning Loss Program Director; and Will fills a dual role of Learning Loss Group Program Facilitator and Good Grief Workshop Facilitator. It is important to note that this team is an integral part of our strategy for achieving our mission and vision. They provide the qualifications and professionalism to the programs we present to the Greater Victoria community that cannot be duplicated even with the most enthusiastic volunteers. It is their reputation as exceptional facilitators that accounts for our overwhelming level of acceptance by our key partners, including the teachers and counsellors in SDs 61, 62 and 63. **LTL** thanks our facilitator team for all the support and caring they have given to the youth in our community.

A number of years ago **LTL** created a youth-oriented educational video to support our programs. Last year, thanks to support from The Hamber Foundation, **LTL** (Shauna) created a *Resource Manual* to accompany the video and make it a complete training package for use by any youth-supporting individual or organization. In 2015 we sold a number of these guides to teachers and counsellors in the Greater Vancouver area.

We continue to reach out to the broader, youth-serving community with information, training and education about youth grief and loss. Please see our **Core Programs Report** where I describe the large number of community partners that **LTL** served in 2015. We are particularly pleased with the contact Shauna made with Surrounded by Cedar and Island Metis Community Services. We are exploring ways in which our programs can provide culturally meaningful activities in support of their community.

It is interesting to note that in 2015 we presented two, one-day *Supporting Youth Workshops* in Burnaby to school teachers and counsellors. This activity has resulted in requests for more training and support in our philosophy and strategies for supporting youth through loss. Clearly, there is an appetite for our products and services in other jurisdictions in BC. Our hope is to continue to extend our programs to meet this need in the coming years.

2. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Please see the 2015 financial statements (*Revenue and Expense Statement and Balance Sheet*).

- Total current assets: \$51,674.39*
- Total revenue: \$74,453.85
- Total expenses: \$69,738.56
- Surplus: \$4,715.29

*\$25,674.39 of this amount comprises restricted investments held in an endowment fund managed by the Victoria Foundation.

3. CORE PROGRAMS REPORT

Learning Loss Group Program

In this sixteen-hour program the clinical counsellor uses proven curriculum to create an open, supportive environment that promotes individual sharing of ideas and feelings regarding issues of death and loss. The goals of the program are to develop an understanding and awareness of normal grief responses; identify and enhance specific coping skills and strategies to help navigate grief and loss in healthy ways; and develop a positive and life-affirming approach to everyday living.

In 2015 **LTL** ran five *Learning Loss Group Programs*. Our programs continue to evolve through thoughtful additions researched and documented by Shauna Janz, David Segal, and Will Bratt.

- Winter –one eight-week school-based program at Royal Oak Middle School.
- Winter – one eight-week school-based program at Colquitz School.
- Spring – one eight-week community-based program at Burnside Gorge Community Centre.
- Fall – one eight-week community-based program.
- Fall – one eight-week school-based program at Reynolds Secondary School.

Good Grief Workshop

In this one-hour workshop, the facilitator opens dialogue with youth in middle and high schools about loss and the process of grief that follows. The workshop facilitator explores with the students what loss is and what can cause it. Topics covered in the workshops include: different responses one may have to loss; how to recognize grief in self and others; how to express one's feelings and grief; and common coping skills and strategies for healing. The workshop facilitator also provides a description of the Learning Loss Group Programs that give those youth who need it an opportunity to explore more completely their own grieving in a supportive non-threatening environment. The tone of the workshops is informational and maintains a lively, friendly pace. The workshop is accompanied by an educational video to reinforce the curriculum and encourage participation.

This workshop continues to be in demand from the schools in all three districts. **LTL** has become an unofficial but important part of the school curriculum for most of the school counsellors and teachers in the Greater Victoria area schools. **LTL** presented 133 workshops to approximately 3,300 youth in 2015.

Community Education Workshops

The goal of this workshop is to provide individuals who work with and support youth an opportunity to explore the topic of how to support healthy strategies and healing to youth experiencing loss. In this one and a half hour workshop, our facilitator provides a space for conversation about teen grief and loss; the complexities of loss that teens may be facing during this time in their lives, and the process of grief that follows. Topics include: grief and mourning distinctions, types of losses teens may experience, emotional and behavioural signs and symptoms, life areas impacted by grief, brief overview of grief theory, coping strategies and support tools, and an overview of the programs and resources that Learning Through Loss has to offer. The tone of the workshop is educational and experiential, and is accompanied by a DVD presentation of "stories of loss" from youth.

Our *Community Education Workshops* are a key part of our strategic plan. They assist **LTL** in educating and increasing the capacity of our community to effectively support youth dealing with grief and loss. This year we presented six workshops to a diverse number of organizations that focus their efforts on assisting youth.

- Aboriginal Youth Internship Program
- Young Parents Resource Centre
- YWCA Moms Program
- Surrounded by Cedar
- Quadra Village Community Centre
- Need 2
- Single Parents Resource Centre
- HYPE Youth Conference
- KEYS Emergency Youth Shelter

Leading Through Loss Program

This program is a multi-week educational training for school-based peer counsellors/mentors, and community-based youth leaders to gain skills on how to recognize and support themselves and their peers experiencing grief. Through dialogue, personal reflection, small group work, educational media, and experiential activities, youth learn helping skills that better equip them with the understanding, insight and tools to be an effective and empathic support. Concepts include: creating safety; caring boundaries; self-care; supportive resources; complexities of loss that impact grief; how to understand the uniqueness of youth grief; 5 life areas and how grief shows up in each; the 8 of grief as a conceptual framework for supporting grief; helpful and unhelpful responses to loss; and creating a personal support team. Youth receive a certificate of completion at the end.

LTL presented our newest program, the four-week *Leading Through Loss Program* at Reynolds High School again this year. In addition, we also presented the program at Threshold Housing and Rock Heights Middle School.

4. LONG TERM PLANS

2015 was a transitional year for LTL. We are implementing a new governance model and have been seeking to enhance and stabilize the board of directors. Initiatives that remained a priority in 2015 and will be examined and prioritized going forward include:

- Planning more updates to our web site and forays into YouTube, Facebook and Twitter as appropriate.
- Continuing to develop and enhance the position of Executive Director.
- Continuing to present our new program *Leading Through Loss* to local schools.
- Continuing to present our *Supporting Youth Workshop* to the youth-serving professionals in Greater Victoria and Greater Vancouver.
- Continuing to advertise for new enthusiastic board members in an attempt to improve sustainability.
- Continuing to encourage our facilitators to introduce new and innovative material into our various programs.
- Continuing to build on our relationships with our current funders and exploring opportunities for additional funding partners.
- Continuing to build partnerships with other community organizations and Aboriginal agencies.
- Continuing to build a solid foundation that will allow LTL to move forward in a controlled and sustainable direction.

5. OUR SUPPORTERS

In 2010 LTL made a strategic decision to partner with School Districts 61-63 in the presentation of our programs. The schools continue to reward us for that decision by enthusiastically subscribing to our workshops and group programs. Our thanks go to the many individual school teachers, school counsellors, and youth and family counsellors that support us and

contribute their time in arranging workshops, contacting parents about group programs, and volunteering their time as co-facilitators.

Our success would not be possible without the strong support we receive from the community through various granting agencies. Our thanks go to them. Current supporters include; PECSF, BC Gaming, Saanich Peninsula Foundation, Santos Anonymous, RBC, Coast Capital Savings Credit Union, and TELUS employees.