



MOVING

FORWARD

TOGETHER



ANNUAL GENERAL REPORT
APRIL 2022 - MARCH 2023

MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER.

At Vecova, we are moving forward together, and our future is full of possibilities. We are a leading edge, accredited charitable organization that meets the lifelong and changing needs of persons of all abilities. We are building a future for people of all abilities where everyone is valued, belongs and thrives.



LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

To Our Community,

I am honoured to address you in this year's annual report as we reflect on the progress we have made at Vecova and set our sights on an even brighter future.

Vecova has always been driven by a deep commitment to inclusion and a genuine desire to build a future for people of all abilities where everyone is valued, belongs and thrives. Over the past year, we have proudly developed a new five-year strategic vision that will guide our organization into the future.

With this strategic vision, we aspire to not only grow our services but also increase our impact on the community. Our organization is rooted in the belief that everyone, regardless of ability, should have equal opportunities to thrive and participate fully in society. We envision a future of inclusion for all, where barriers are dismantled, and persons with disabilities are empowered to achieve their full potential. Our Vision serves as our guiding star, inspiring us to push boundaries and innovate in ways that truly make a difference.

As we embark on this new chapter in our journey, I am filled with a sense of optimism and excitement. Our collective efforts have laid a strong foundation for future growth and progress, and I have no doubt that with our new strategic vision, Vecova will continue to lead the way in championing inclusion and creating a better future for all.

Our progress would not have been possible without the dedication and passion of our incredible staff, volunteers, donors, and partners. Your unwavering support has been instrumental in propelling us forward and empowering us to make a meaningful impact on the lives of persons with disabilities.

I invite you to join us as we move forward together, driven by our shared commitment to inclusion for all. Your continued support, whether through donations, volunteerism, or advocacy, will be invaluable as we strive to achieve our ambitious goals.

Thank you!

Dr. Ivan Sierralta
Vecova's Board Chair



LETTER FROM THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Moving Forward Together. I can't help but be reminded of these words every day as we work together to provide excellence in programs, housing, social services, social enterprises and more to our valued community.

This past year, we were able to return to many in-person activities, which we know are so vital to the individuals and communities we serve. We have also been steadfast in our commitment to implement innovative strategies that will pave the way for our future success. This year's Annual Report provides a glimpse of the progress we have made this past year to help people grow, connect and thrive.

At Vecova, we want everyone to feel they belong.

In addition to continuing to offer our world-class services and programming, we are also moving forward together by continuing to forge ahead with our vision for a Centre for All Abilities.

It is a daunting task, but I keep reminding myself of the many struggles and challenges our Founder Christine Meikle faced when she started sharing her bold, progressive and innovative vision. Starting from her kitchen table, Christine's determination lit a spark and eventually, Vecova was born. We are proud to continue to carry the torch to ensure that everyone in our community can access the services and programs they need to lead fulfilling lives.

Within our organization, we continue to leverage our expertise to develop initiatives that address the evolving needs of persons with disabilities, and we continue to invest in resources to help our team work together effectively and purposefully.



Thank you for your support, commitment and service to our community.

Sincerely,
Kelly Holmes-Binns
CEO, Vecova



OUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE

APRIL 1, 2022 TO MARCH 31, 2023



EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

- ▶ 80 participants
- ▶ 35 business partners



YOUTH PROGRAMS

- ▶ 40 youth participants
- 139 employers connected through work experiences



ENTERPRISES

- ▶ 56 employment opportunities for persons facing employment barriers
- ▶ 2,973 residences in Calgary signed up to support Vecova through the Bottle Pickup Service
- ▶ 36,360 visited our Bottle Depot



HOUSING SERVICES

- ▶ 145 consumers supported in a variety of housing
- Independent Living, Respite, Home Sharing, Cluster Housing and Supported Living



MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

- ▶ 880 total consumers supported
 - 195 consumers supported through 1858 individual counselling sessions
 - 184 group sessions attended by 43 individuals
 - 107 attendees at Education Sessions with 18 different agencies



WAYFINDER COMMUNITY ACCESS PROGRAM

- ▶ 153 consumers supported



SOCIAL & COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

Includes Explore Abilities, Dementia Program, Child & Youth Adaptive Programs

- ▶ 707 program registrants
- ▶ 517 used fee assistance
- ▶ 151 Children and Youth Adapted Recreation Program registrants



AQUATICS, HEALTH & FITNESS

- ▶ 66,693 participants
 - Plus 45,000 users that use our space as renters, for a total of 111,693
- ▶ 13,000 drop-in admissions
- ▶ 9,520 registrants across all programs



COMMUNITIES SERVED

- ▶ Calgary
- ▶ Bighorn Municipal District
- ▶ Rocky View County Municipal District
- ▶ Banff National Park

VALUED. BELONG. THRIVE.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027

In 2022 we were pleased to present the next stage in Vecova’s evolution. Our [five-year strategic plan](#) sets a new direction where innovation driven by diversity is the destination. As we move forward together, we will:

- ▶ **BUILD FOR THE LONG TERM.** We have mapped out bold ambitions with an emphasis on sustainability.
- ▶ **HARNESS OUR ABILITIES.** We will use our strengths, skills and voices to increase our impact on the disability community and other communities we serve.
- ▶ **SEEK OUT OPPORTUNITIES.** We will listen to our community’s needs and look for more connections to bring more opportunities to life.

OUR AREAS OF FOCUS

Our programs meet the needs of our community through a continuum of services, supporting a person with disabilities through the three focus areas listed below. All of Vecova’s operations, programs and services centre around these areas to ensure we are meeting our Mission, “building a future for people of all abilities where everyone is valued, belongs and thrives.”



ENTERPRISE & EMPLOYMENT



HOUSING



WELLNESS

OUR STRATEGIC GOALS

- ▶ **OUR PEOPLE:** Vecova will unlock potential through our culture of inclusion and engagement.
- ▶ **OUR INSIGHT:** Vecova will lead social change through community connection.
- ▶ **OUR STORY:** Vecova will be known.
- ▶ **OUR SUSTAINABILITY:** Vecova will forge a path toward a successful future.



CITY OF CALGARY FUNDING BRINGS US ONE STEP CLOSER TO THE CENTRE OF ALL ABILITIES



Exterior renderings of the Centre for All Abilities

In 2022 we were pleased to announce that Vecova has been approved to receive \$9.095 million towards our new Centre for All Abilities under the [Major Partners Capital Program](#) with the City of Calgary.

The current Vecova facility has been deemed to be at the end of its life cycle based on assessment studies conducted between 2016 and 2022. Approximately 30% of the building has already been closed due to its poor condition and is no longer being used to deliver services to Calgarians.

This funding brings us one step closer to our dream of creating Vecova’s Centre for All Abilities, which is expected to accommodate up to one million visitors per year. The new facility will have a social return on investment (SROI) of \$6.39 for every \$1 invested, compared to the current facility which generates \$2.34 per dollar invested.

We appreciate this support from the city council and Mayor Jyoti Gondek!



Peter and Kris Chung, Susan Taylor, Heather Burke, Jo-Anne Willment, Noah Ulicki

PROGRESSING OUR 12TH AVENUE ACCESSIBLE HOUSING PROJECT

Thanks to seed funding from [Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation’s \(CMHC\)](#) received in fall 2022, we have been exploring the redevelopment of Vecova’s 12th Avenue SE group living. The house has been home to Vecova residents living with disabilities since 1983.

We saw an opportunity with this property to serve more people in need of accessible and affordable housing. We worked with [GEC Architecture](#) to design a new home that follows a universal design approach, ensuring the fundamental needs of persons with disabilities are adequately met.

The new development will more than triple residential capacity, offering a safe, comfortable and accessible space for up to 17 residents across 13 units. It will make a significant impact on the current market gap for affordable and accessible homes for those living with a disability.

In March 2023 we became one step closer to providing this brand-new, 100% accessible, state-of-the-art housing facility to Calgarians with the announcement of \$1.9M in funding from [Alberta’s Affordable Housing Partnership Program](#).

We thank the Government of Canada and the City of Calgary for recognizing the need to address this gap in the housing market, and for partnering with Vecova to help fill it. We look forward to securing additional funding as soon as possible so we can get started on construction with an estimated completion time frame of 18 months.

This opportunity to build our dream home will help us achieve our Vision of inclusion for everyone, enabling Calgarians of all abilities to move forward together.



The current house (left) and proposed design (right) of the 12th Avenue Accessible Housing Project

BUILDING A CULTURE OF ENGAGEMENT AND BELONGING

We’ve been focused on moving forward together by creating an organizational culture where employees feel a true sense of belonging, appreciation and engagement. We started our internal culture transformation in Spring 2022 with a three-phased approach.

PHASE 1: ASSESS (COMPLETE)

Phase one focused on gathering input from the experts: our employees. Through an organization-wide survey and a design group process with a cross representation of Vecova’s diverse workforce, the assessment results informed the creation of a new cultural framework with measurable milestones to be achieved over the next six to 24 months.

This framework maps out the desired future state of engagement and belonging with core activities under each of the three pillars – connection, communication and culture.



PHASE 2: IMPLEMENT (IN PROGRESS)

We are currently implementing strategies under these pillars that will bring the framework’s core activities to life and track our key milestones. Some of these strategies include the creation of an employee social committee and adjustments to our standard meeting structures that will improve information sharing and communication between leaders and employees. We continue to explore and implement new strategies that will help us achieve our desired future state.

PHASE 3 – MEASURE AND SUSTAIN (IN PROGRESS)

This work will focus on reviewing the results of strategies implemented in Phase 2 and seeking ways to strengthen our culture of engagement and belonging. There will be an overlap between Phases 2 and 3; it will involve benchmarking success indicators and measuring for impact.

We are committed to embodying belonging at the centre of all we do while focusing on employee engagement and investing in our workforce. This is just the beginning of Vecova’s continuous journey to create and sustain an internal culture focused on engagement and belonging.

CELEBRATING SIGNIFICANT EMPLOYEE MILESTONES

In 2022 we had the pleasure of celebrating several significant employee milestones at Vecova, honouring years of dedicated service to our community. We are filled with gratitude and admiration as we recognize the dedication and commitment of two exceptional employees.

GORD LITTLEJOHNS
45 YEARS AT VECOVA




Since 1977, Gord has made a significant impact working in various roles at Vecova. With a strong personal connection to the organization and a passion for improving the lives of persons with disabilities, Gord has helped to progress the exceptional work being done at Vecova. After 45 years of service, he continues to make meaningful contributions to our organization and make a positive impact on the lives of our consumers.

Today, Gord serves as a Team Leader in the Wayfinder program. As Vecova continues to evolve, he finds inspiration in the organization's growth and determination to enrich our community. Gord finds fulfilment in making a difference in the lives of persons with disabilities and helping our community move forward together. He is a highly valued member of our team.

Kari has been an integral part of Vecova for the last three decades. The fulfilment Kari derives from her work lies in her holistic approach to helping consumers live their best lives. Believing that addressing only a portion of a person's needs is insufficient, she champions a comprehensive and person-centred approach.

Kari has held many positions at Vecova and now works in Housing Services supporting group living. Each day brings new challenges, and Kari embraces them eagerly, utilising her skills and knowledge to make a positive difference in consumers' lives. Her ability to brighten someone's day and contribute to their well-being makes her a cherished member of our team.

KARI PEARSON
30 YEARS AT VECOVA



We take immense pride in the accomplishments of our team and firmly believe that their unwavering contributions have been instrumental in driving our continued success. We extend our heartfelt congratulations and appreciation to Gord, Kari and all the other employees who celebrated remarkable milestones in 2022.



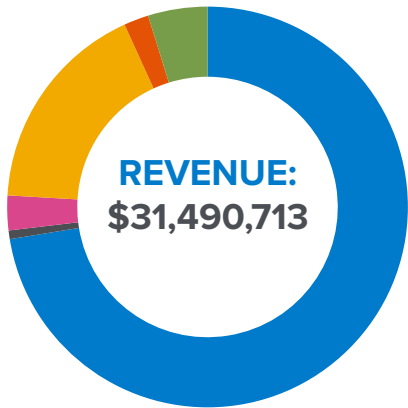
OTHER HIGHLIGHTS

- ▶ Completed the **LEAD initiative** as part of our journey to building an inclusive workplace through the Abilities Centre’ LEAD Canada process
- ▶ Opened a new **cluster housing environment** in partnership with Horizon Housing Society, moving 13 individuals into eight affordable, accessible and safe apartments
- ▶ Launched partnership with **Immigrant Services Calgary Society** to assist new immigrant women in their journey to find employment
- ▶ Collaborated with **University of Calgary’s Cummings School of Medicine** for the second year in a row
- ▶ Proudly supported **Disability Employment Awareness Month (DEAM)**
- ▶ **Completed production of “Our Community”**, a half hour program on [AMI-TV](#) featuring Vecova that highlights people, places, organizations and things that make life more enjoyable and accessible for the disability community across Canada.

AWARDS & MENTIONS

- ▶ Aquatics, Health and Fitness won **Honourable Mention award** at Calgary’s Child Magazine’s Parent’s Choice Awards – “Best Family Recreation Facility!”
- ▶ Vecova Bottle Depot Recognized in [Alberta Bottle Depot Association’s “Applaud a Depot”](#)
- ▶ Vecova’s Accessible Programs & Services **featured in Avenue Magazine**
- ▶ Vecova’s facility was featured as a [host location for filming HBO’s The Last of Us!](#)

FINANCIAL INFORMATION



Province of Alberta
72.7%

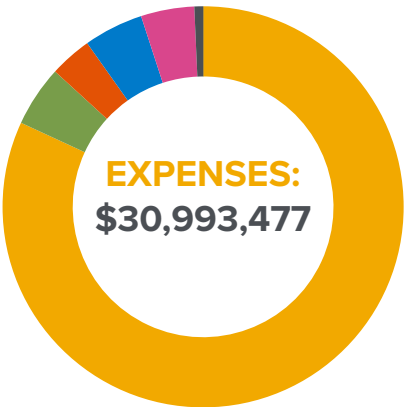
Government of Canada
0.6%

City of Calgary
2.8%

Earned Revenue
17.3%

Fundraising & Grants
2.0%

Investments & Other
4.8%



Salaries & Benefits
81.9%

Operations
4.9%

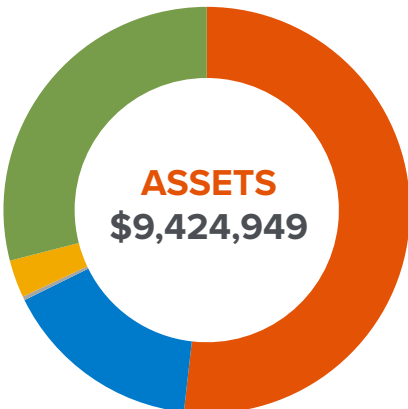
Centralized Services
3.4%

Cost of Sales
4.8%

Direct Program
4.3%

Amortization
0.7%

Interest and Other
0%



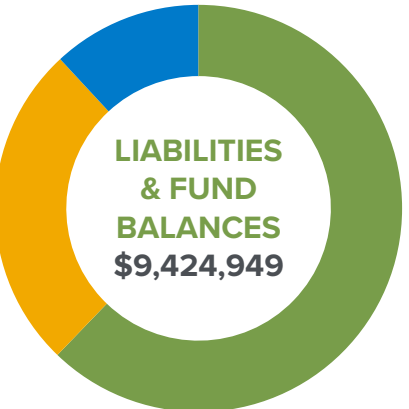
Cash & Cash Equivalents
51.8%

Accounts Receivable
15.9%

Inventory
0.3%

Prepays
3.0%

Capital Assets
29.0%



Fund Balances
62.2%

A/P & Accrued Liabilities
25.9%

Unearned Revenue
11.9%

Debt
0%

THANK YOU

We would like to acknowledge our thousands of donors for their ongoing support. Every donation improves accessibility and inclusion for thousands in the Calgary Region.

BUSINESSES

- ▶ ATB Financial
- ▶ AMD
- ▶ Benevity
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- ▶ Canadian Pacific
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- ▶ Rocky View School Division

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- ▶ Ace Fund at Calgary Foundation
- ▶ CanProm Foundation C/O Aqueduct Foundation
- ▶ Graydon and Dorothy Morrison Fund at Calgary Foundation
- ▶ Hillhurst Rebekah Lodge #116
- ▶ McKenna Family Fund
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- ▶ PetroCanada CareMakers Foundation-Mental Health Supports
- ▶ Rob and Sheila Innes Foundation C/O Aqueduct Foundations
- ▶ Turner Family Foundation at the Calgary Foundation
- ▶ Winnifred Griffith Legacy Fund at Calgary Foundation

SERVICE CLUBS/GROUPS

- ▶ PEI Rum Runners
- ▶ United Way

FUNDRAISERS

- ▶ Chubb Insurance Company of Canada-Charity Golf Tournament-EFL Canada- Calgary Team Donation
- ▶ Fairmount Chateau Lake Louise-Disability Employment Awareness Month

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GIFT IN KIND DONORS

WE’VE ALWAYS BEEN MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER

In 2022 we’ve been reflecting on Vecova’s history to ground ourselves in the values it takes to move forward towards all the possibilities our future has to offer.

Vecova’s success can be traced back to the unwavering determination and passion of one mother, Christine Meikle. In the 1950s her son was born with Down Syndrome and despite being told that he was unteachable and should be placed in an institution, she refused to accept this as the only option. Along with other parents who were seeking resources and services for their children with disabilities, the group came together to create what grew into Vecova - a place where people of all abilities can receive the support they need in order to thrive.

Moving forward, together. That’s what “Vecova” means - and since our inception in 1964, that has been our goal. What started as a then-revolutionary call for basic rights and vocational training for people of all abilities, has grown over the past 50 years into one of the country’s premier organizations providing programming and services for people with disabilities.

Vecova currently welcomes more than 390,000 visitors per year, and we’re determined to make an even bigger impact with a new **Centre for All Abilities**. The demand for disability services has increased by 31% over the past decade, leaving many individuals and their families on waitlists for much-needed support. The need for Vecova’s services continues to grow, and we’re committed to filling that need.

Like our founder, we are passionate, bold and determined in our Mission to build a future for people of all abilities where everyone is valued, belongs and thrives. We’re committed to continuing Christine’s legacy by building a future for Vecova where everyone is valued, belongs and thrives.

ABOUT VECOVA

Vecova is based in Calgary, Alberta Canada and our centres are located on the traditional territories of First Nations Peoples of Treaty 7. The Treaty 7 Lands in Southern Alberta are home to the Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, Siksika Nation, Tsuut’ina Nation, and the Bearspaw, Chiniki and Wesley (Stoney-Nakoda) Nations. Calgary is also home to Region 3 of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

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OUR 2022 LEADERSHIP

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- ▶ Tom Naested, Director of Wellness Services
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