

# ANNUAL REPORT

COMMUNITY FUTURES NORTH FRASER



# 2023-24

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Community Futures (CF), funded by Pacific Economic Development Canada, empowers local entrepreneurs and small businesses. We offer advisory services, self-employment training, business plan development, loans, and community initiatives in Mission, Kent/Agassiz, Harrison Hot Springs, and nearby areas. With a volunteer board and dedicated staff, we're committed to helping small businesses thrive. Thank you to our board and staff for their dedication to CF North Fraser and our communities.

We are proud to share our remarkable achievements for 2023-24, surpassing previous records in several areas. Notably, our advisory services saw a 41% increase, thanks to our new Business Development Officer and the addition of an events coordinator this past summer. Lending activities led to a 450% increase in job creation compared to last year.

We also welcomed new board members, contributing a total of 656 volunteer hours. Our strategic focus on education has been robust, with partnerships, collaborations, and presentations involving Mission Secondary School, Riverside College, and the University of the Fraser Valley. Community partnerships flourished as we participated in 29 projects within our service area. Additionally, we have strengthened regional representation and collaboration with Community Futures South Fraser and Stó:lō Community Futures.



**Heather O'Coin**



**Gwen Schmidt**



33163 2nd Avenue  
Mission, BC V2V 6T8

604.826.6252

[www.northfraser.org](http://www.northfraser.org)

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Heather O'Coin**  
Mission, BC  
**Chair**

**Janessa Derksen**  
Mission, BC  
**Vice Chair**

**Nancy Maclean**  
Harrison Mills, BC  
**Director**

**Lindsay Algra**  
Mission, BC  
**Director**

**Tom Osterberg**  
Mission, BC  
**Director**

**Tabitha Ewert**  
Mission, BC  
**Director**

**Alex Rocco**  
Mission, BC  
**Director**

**Dan Schubert**  
Mission, BC  
**Director**

**Kevin Allan**  
Mission, BC  
**Director**

**Josh Bruniski**  
Mission, BC  
**Director**

**Carol Hamilton**  
Mission, Councillor  
**Mission City Council  
Liaison**

**Duane Post**  
District of Kent, Councillor  
**District of Kent Council  
Liaison**

**Michie Vidal**  
Village of Harrison,  
Councillor  
**Village of Harrison  
Council Liaison**

**Cory Cassel**  
Electoral Area G  
**FVRD, Liaison**

## OUR STAFF



**Sim Brar**  
Business Analyst



**Jeanette Calderone**  
Administration Director



**Holly Seeley**  
Marketing Coordinator



**Amanda Meggait**  
Program Director



# STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2023-26

## Our Mandate

We help entrepreneurs and businesses grow, start and succeed.

## Our Vision

Our vision is economic wellness for businesses and communities in our region.

## Our Guiding Principles

**Integrity** We act ethically, honestly, and responsibly in all our actions, without compromise.

**Respect** We treat each other and everyone who works with us with dignity and professionalism.

**Equity and Inclusion** We value all types of differences, backgrounds and lived experiences in the development of our organization so that people who come to us feel safe and empowered to succeed.

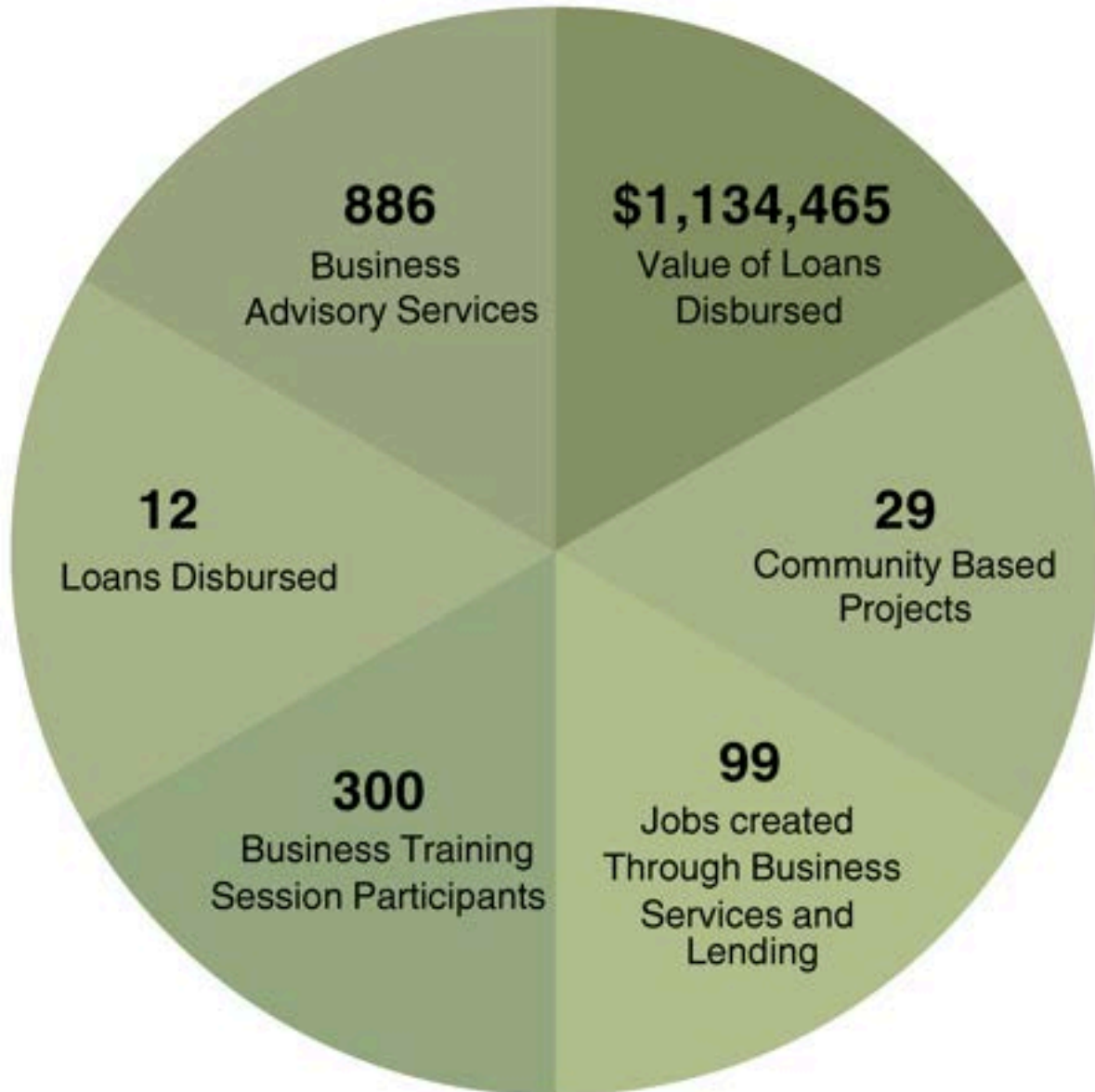
**Transparency** We are committed to earning trust and credibility through good governance, ongoing evaluation, and open, accurate sharing of information with our oversight bodies, community partners, clients, and the public.

# COMMUNITY IMPACT

Elevate your community's potential with the CF Program! Our mission is to empower local areas by fostering the development and execution of solutions tailored to their unique challenges. We're committed to driving sustainable growth through strategic economic development and capacity enhancement.

Community Futures North Fraser stands at the forefront of this initiative, serving the vibrant regions of Mission, Kent/Agassiz, Harrison Mills, Deroche, Dewdney, and Harrison Hot Springs. We're not just a funding source; we're your business ally, offering essential loans and expert advisory services to small and medium-sized enterprises. Our goal? To catalyze diversification, fortify the local economy, and cultivate a thriving business ecosystem. Join us in shaping a prosperous future for our communities!

## INVESTMENT IN OUR COMMUNITY



# MARKETING INITIATIVES

## Expanding Our Reach in 2023/24



This year, our summer student positions, Marketing Coordinator and Events Coordinator, have been game changers! They helped us connect with over **246** businesses and **373** community members at local events and markets.

In August, our booth at Mission Fest on 1st Avenue boosted our community presence and brand recognition. Our engaging games drew in over **191** people, making it one of our most successful events.

We joined the city's Market in the Park series, enhancing our social media following and engagement through fun contests. Our Event Coordinator's efforts also expanded our business reach by networking with local vendors.

Our students attended the Twilight Artisan Market every Thursday, connecting with over **77** unique vendors and spreading awareness of our services.

Sponsoring local events and community initiatives helps Community Futures North Fraser build vital bonds with community partners and gain positive recognition across the community.

We proudly supported the Mission Environmental Stewardship Society's 'Green Living' Festival with a \$1,000 contribution. This event promoted sustainable lifestyles and connected us with eco-friendly businesses.

We also contributed \$1,500 to the WoW (Words on Wheels) Bus, a literacy outreach initiative by the Mission Association for Community Living. This mobile library fosters a love for reading throughout the community.



CONNECT WITH US

[NORTHFRASER.ORG](http://NORTHFRASER.ORG)



# SUCCESS STORY

## AVO EVERLASTING ESSENTIALS

*Sometimes, you meet someone at your workplace and you know nothing about them, but you end up being much more than just co-workers; you are instant best friends. That is the story of how Jessica and Amy met. They were both working at the same dental office in side-by-side operatories. Teamwork, integrity, and values bonded these two as they worked together since the early 2000s. They both have a passion for all things oral care and compassion for the well-being of our environment.*

In March of 2020, COVID abruptly halted everything, especially as dental professionals; we were among the first to be told to stop working. This had a huge impact on all of us, but got us thinking “What if this happens again?”. The lightbulb moment happened for Founder Jessica in the summer of 2020; she knew she and Amy were always talking about creating the ‘perfect’ toothbrush.. what if we did it?! The ideas were rolling, and research had begun; together with years of dental knowledge and feedback from colleagues and patients, we knew we were onto something bigger than us; we were doing this for future generations...and for the planet.



AVO Everlasting Essentials Inc. (AVO) is now a women-owned company founded by Jessica Drader and Amy Pannu, both Registered Dental Hygienists living in Mission British Columbia. Jessica grew up in Abbotsford, and Amy was from Aldergrove. Their Fraser Valley upbringing led them both to Mission in adulthood, and that is how they found Community Futures. Literally, inside of a magazine cover! They contacted the office and were met with guidance and support for the application process and beyond. The funding and resources from Community Futures allowed AVO to launch in the summer/fall of 2023 with a patent-pending, sustainable toothbrush and a natural, fluoride-free toothpaste in recyclable tubes. From co-workers to friends and now business partners, the possibilities are endless for Amy and Jessica.

We recognized the need to reduce plastic waste for the sake of future generations. We wanted to create an oral care product line that not only aligned with environmental values but also provided a clutter-free modernization of the bathroom counter, which is why AVO's toothbrush allows for effective bristle air-drying and magnetic storage options. We also felt it was time to update the daily oral care routine to make it more aesthetically appealing.

AVO Everlasting Essentials Inc. aims to offer consciously designed products, providing an all-natural oral health care solution with a modern aesthetic while contributing to a cleaner planet. Our mission at AVO is to be part of the solution as our world continues to grow and evolve. Join the AVO movement and find AVO in local stockists, or come check us out in person at local community events, markets and trade shows or visit AVO online at <https://avoeverlastingessentials.com/>.



# GIVING BACK

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our Board and Committee members for their unwavering dedication and volunteerism. Their commitment to our organization and the success of our clients is invaluable. Over the past year, we proudly acknowledge the impressive contribution of 656 volunteer hours from our Board of Directors, Finance Committee, Loans and Investment Committee, and Business Plan Committee. Thank you for your remarkable service and support.

## VOLUNTEER HOURS



# COMMUNITY PARTNERS



[NORTHFRASER.ORG](http://NORTHFRASER.ORG)