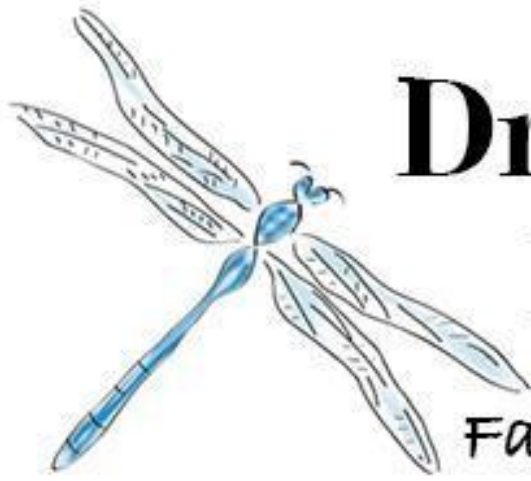




Dragonfly Pond

Family Society

Strategic Plan 2023-2028

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Our Story

The story of Dragonfly Pond Family Society (DFP) began with a mother's love and a search for community. In 1998, Wendy moved from Vancouver to the South Okanagan to be closer to family for support with her son, Sky, who lived with Neonatal Adrenoleukodystrophy (NALD).

In the city, Wendy had accessed the complex care of Canuck Place and BC Children's Hospital. In the Okanagan, she found a beautiful landscape, but a profound gap in services. There were no ready-made spaces for families like hers to connect, find respite, or simply feel understood. Refusing to let families walk this path in isolation, Wendy began to reach out.

From Dream to Reality (1999-2001)

What started as a series of kitchen-table conversations in 1999 quickly gained momentum. Wendy was joined by local advocates- including Nursing Supports Coordinator Pam McCluskey, Family Supports Coordinator Colleen Power, and Public Health Nurse Lynn Cook.

The vision was clear: create a regional support system that didn't exist. In 1999, the group secured its first \$10,000 provincial grant, allowing them to move from an idea to a pilot project. During a pivotal meeting at the Penticton Library, the name Dragonfly Pond Family Society was officially chosen. It was inspired by a dream Wendy had where a dragonfly visited her as a representation of Sky- a symbol of transformation, adaptability, and finding light even in the depths of the water.

- 1999: The first meetings were held to identify the needs of South Okanagan families.
- 2000: The first pilot programs were launched to test how to best support the community.
- 2001: Officially incorporated as a Society, solidifying its commitment to the region.

Based in Penticton but serving the entire South Okanagan region, DFP was built on the philosophy that "little bits of good" eventually overwhelm the world. This led to the creation of two cornerstone pillars that remain vital today:

- **Respitivity:** A unique blend of *Respite* and *Hospitality*. In partnership with local businesses, DFP provides parents with "breathers"; a meal, a hotel stay, or a night out offering the vital gift of rest and self-care.
- **Dragonflies and Minnows:** These cherished spring and summer break programs provide inclusive, adaptive activities in the community, ensuring that every child can experience the joy of participation without barriers.

Today we continue to honor Wendy's original dream and Sky's legacy, ensuring that the "pond" is always a place of safety, support, and belonging.

Who We Are

Our Path Forward

For over 25 years, the children who first inspired this society have grown into adults, yet the mission remains as vital as ever. Today, Dragonfly Pond Family Society provides a variety of programs in partnership with community organizations, facilitating information sharing and inclusive participation.

Context and Need

The families we serve often face unique challenges that lead to feelings of worry, frustration, and isolation. Children may struggle to participate in desired activities, find peers, or feel understood, while parents are concerned about their child's future and their own support networks. This plan is a direct response to these identified needs, aiming to create a reality where families feel supported, children have access to a "normal life," and all members are empowered to thrive.

Geographic Service Area

Our geographic service area includes Penticton, Naramata, Summerland, OK Falls, Oliver, Osoyoos, Keremeos, and Princeton. It does **not** include Rock Creek, Hope, or any areas from Peachland north.

People Served

We serve families with children under 19 who have complex care needs.

Our Vision

South Okanagan Similkameen families with children under 19 who have complex care needs feel welcome and included in all aspects of their community life.

Our Mission

Dragonfly Pond Family Society (DFP) provides a variety of programs in partnership with other community organizations and facilitates information sharing about community opportunities for inclusive participation.

We develop allies throughout the community so that families feel welcome and comfortable to participate on their own.

Our Values

Our work is guided by the following core values:

- **Advocacy:** We are relentless advocates for adaptations so that our families feel welcome and included in community activities.
- **Allyship:** We are committed to building and nurturing supportive relationships so that our families feel welcome and included.
- **Family Inclusion:** The inclusion of and support for the whole family in our programming.
- **Information Sharing:** The continuous sharing of information about any and all opportunities available to our families.
- The importance of demonstrating the highest levels of tolerance at all times.

Our Core Programs

- **Family Get Together:** Held monthly (typically on Sundays), these gatherings provide a vital space for families to connect in a relaxed, inclusive environment. While children engage in developmentally appropriate play and activities, parents and caregivers have the opportunity to share experiences and build a supportive peer network. These events focus on reducing isolation and ensure every family feels a sense of belonging in our community.
- **Respite:** A signature DFP program that combines "Respite" and "Hospitality." We partner with local businesses to provide parents and caregivers with much-needed "breathers"- such as a meal, a hotel stay, or a night out. This program recognizes that for parents of children with complex needs, self-care is essential to family resilience.
- **Dragonflies and Minnows:** Our flagship spring and summer break program. We offer inclusive, adaptive activities in the community, art in the park, community outings, and new activities, utilizing specialized equipment to ensure that children of all abilities can experience the joy of play and physical activity.
- **Annual Christmas Party:** This "barrier-free" celebration allows families to enjoy the holiday spirit with themed activities, refreshments, and gifts. It is a day dedicated to creating "little bits of joy" and lasting holiday memories for the entire Dragonfly Pond family.
- **The Uniquely Fashionable Fashion Show:** This celebratory event provides our community with a dedicated stage to express their unique personalities and build self-confidence. It is a powerful evening of advocacy where differences are not just accommodated- they are the star of the show.

Our New Programs

- **Teen Get Together:** Launching in 2025, this monthly program focuses on fostering independence and social connections for youth with complex care needs. Activities are varied and age-appropriate; ranging from VR gaming and swimming to movie nights, providing teens with the opportunity to build lasting friendships and engage in community life in a safe, supervised, and fun setting.
- **SibShop:** Recognizing that the whole family is part of the journey, our monthly SibShop program is dedicated to siblings of children with complex care needs. Based on a proven peer-support model, SibShops mix high-energy recreational play with opportunities for siblings aged 6-12 to connect with others who "just get it," helping them navigate their unique family dynamics with confidence.

Executive Summary

The Dragonfly Pond Family Society (DFP) was born out of a mother's vision to ensure that no family in the South Okanagan walks the journey of raising a child with complex care needs alone. Since its inception in 1999 and formal incorporation in 2001, DFP has evolved from a grassroots support group into a vital regional resource, providing inclusive programming that fosters belonging, resilience, and joy.

As we enter the 2023–2028 strategic period, the Society is at a pivotal crossroads of growth. The foundation of this strategic plan is the transition to a professionalized leadership model that supports our dedicated staff and board members and ensures the Society's longevity. A primary objective of this plan is the hiring of an Executive Director to work alongside our long-standing Program Coordinator. This transition is designed to streamline administration, enhance board support, and provide the strategic capacity needed to expand our impact across the region while allowing our frontline staff to focus on direct service delivery.

Our strategic focus for the next five years is built on three pillars:

1. **Programmatic Excellence:** Expanding our flagship programs like Dragonflies & Minnows and Respitality to meet increased demand, and be even more accessible across the South Okanagan.
2. **Community and Family Support:** Strengthening our role as a regional hub for resource navigation and peer-to-peer connection for families and siblings.
3. **Financial and Operational Sustainability:** Professionalizing our internal systems and ensuring long-term financial health through diverse funding and robust governance.

By aligning our historical heart with professionalized leadership, Dragonfly Pond Family Society is committed to being a "catalyst for belonging" for the next generation of families.

Strategic Goals and Priorities

Goal 1: Programmatic Excellence

Objective: To expand and enhance program offerings to meet the diverse needs of families and children under 19 years old.

Key Actions:

- **Program Innovation:** Research and plan new program initiatives that address emerging family needs.
- **Inclusive Excellence:** Ensure all programs are fully inclusive and adaptive.
- **Strategic Partnerships:** Maintain and expand relationships with community organizations, businesses and supporters to diversify activity options.
- **Operations:** Support the Program Coordinator in delivering core programs.

Goal 2: Community and Family Support

Objective: To ensure families feel supported and have the resources they need to thrive.

Key Actions:

- **Navigate services:** Provide resources to help families navigate available community services.
- **Build connections:** Help families feel less isolated and more knowledgeable by supporting them in developing a personal network.
- **Foster belonging:** Create environments where children can build lasting friendships and feel a true sense of belonging.
- **Support the whole family:** Ensure programs are family-oriented and include parents/caregivers to foster a community of shared experience.

Goal 3: Financial and Operational Sustainability

Objective: To establish a robust and sustainable operational foundation.

Key Actions:

- **Administrative Relief:** Transition key administrative and financial tasks from the Program Coordinator (PC) to the Executive Director (ED), allowing the PC to focus on direct program delivery.
- **Strategic Oversight:** The ED will oversee the execution of this 2023-2028 Strategic Plan and will serve as the primary liaison to the Board of Directors
- **Secure diverse funding:** Regularly apply for and follow up on grants to support a wide range of programming.
- **Financial oversight:** Maintain consistent financial reports and ensure a cash reserve of at least six months.
- **Professionalize operations:** Develop and maintain Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and regularly update organizational bylaws.

Learn more about Dragonfly Pond Family Society

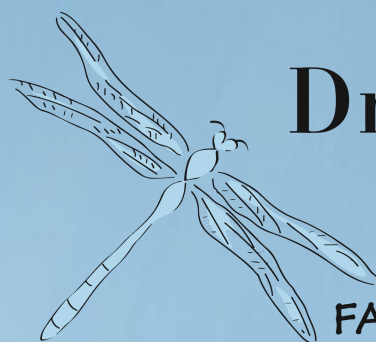
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**Dragonfly
Pond**

FAMILY SOCIETY