



2022 HOC Annual Newsletter

Our Vision: Okotoks, Our Healthy Home

Our Mission: To facilitate and promote wellness through community partnerships

President's Message – Kim Pomares

2022 has been another successful year for the Community Garden. Every spring it is wonderful to see the garden wake up again. Many thanks for Jesse Lavoie for leading the community gardeners. Several people were involved in the improvement of the composting facilities this year. And the final result was celebrated by a BBQ and training session on the new composters. I personally enjoyed learning and visiting with board members and gardeners that day.

Our monthly meetings this year have reviewed how HOC contributes to our community. What do we want to focus on and what team of volunteers would we need to make it happen? The result of these conversations led to a choice to make the Community Garden and related activities our main focus as we move into 2023. When HOC was first started, Okotoks was a much smaller town with no Urgent Care Centre and HOC embraced a broad mandate to promote health in our community. Over the last two decades, HOC has been a significant partner in our town, but recent years have seen an evolution in our role as the Town and its services have grown, as well as the services provided by AHS.

I am glad that we have had productive discussions this year that have resulted in a renewed sense of direction for HOC as we start out in 2023. This coming year we will continue to support the Community Garden at the bottom of Kinsmen Hill. We have also appointed a Greenhouse Committee to investigate how much a structure could contribute to food security and health in Okotoks.

I count myself blessed to associate with the wonderful volunteers who contribute to the Healthy Okotoks Coalition. Thank you for your efforts and commitment. You make a difference. Happy New Year to you all!

— Kim.

Okotoks Food Bank Community Learning Garden



Beginning of the season



End of the season

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Community Garden – Jessie Lavoie

Once again, we are thrilled to share a very successful year of Community Gardening in Okotoks. 2022 saw a slow start to summer, that quickly led into a hot and dry growing season. Garden flourished this year and it was a fantastic year for squash and tomatoes. Kale and cabbages were hit hard by some hungry flea beetles but that is the nature of gardening – sometimes the bugs are hungrier than us!

As always, the community spirit in the garden is a highlight, with the Foodbank Community Learning Garden having an amazing year with a lot of gardeners volunteering their time to help out. Many hands helped out around the garden all season with weeding and other light maintenance duties which meant the garden ran smoothly with the help of everyone!

Maintenance is ongoing with regular repairs to plots being made to help give everyone the best growing conditions possible. Town of Okotoks staff as always were a huge asset to the garden continue to support us through their knowledge and skills. The Parks team are regularly helping with compost bins, the water and sharing their vast knowledge, and, the Community Wellness team continues to be a play a significant role to the ongoing success of the garden. Thank you Town of Okotoks!!!

This year a new garden was added in Okotoks, which was really exciting to see. The Drake Landing Community Garden is a wonderful addition to Okotoks and we really look forward to seeing more gardens throughout the town. HOC continues to manage and support the 55 plots plus the Okotoks Food Bank Learning Garden in our existing garden and support the community by sharing our knowledge and experience with new and potential gardens. We are passionate about community gardening so being able to support the wider community and promote gardening in something we look forward to continuing.

2022 was another great and we look forward to continuing in 2023. Thank you to every single gardener who contributed and made our space welcoming and supportive.

Follow us: <https://www.facebook.com/healthyokotokscoalition>

A reminder that if you are interested in getting a garden plot but did not have one the previous year, please email hoc@okotoks.ca or call 403-995-2773 to get on the waiting list. We have 55 plots that are available to rent for \$30 a season.

Okotoks Food Bank Report - Bente Yanota

Community Learning Garden

We have finished another successful growing season at the Okotoks Food Bank Community Garden. We dealt with a wet spring, then HOT and DRY weather for the rest of the season!

- This season we harvested 2,042 lbs of produce from the garden.
- Our 13 volunteers logged over 178 hours helping with watering, weeding and harvesting throughout the season.

If anyone knows of people wanting to volunteer next year in the garden, they can visit our website at Okotoksfoodbank.ca to fill out an application form.



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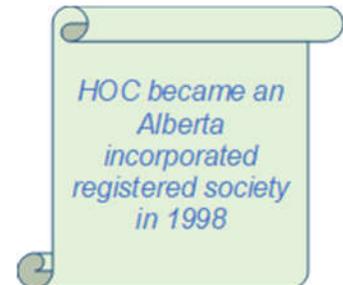
Community Wellness Report – Debbie Posey, Town of Okotoks Community Wellness Manager and HOC staff liaison

2022 was a year of transitioning from masks and isolation to cautiously starting the move to recovery presenting new challenges again as the COVID-19 pandemic continued. Opportunities to promote social wellness and connection became an even higher priority. Our small (but mighty) Community Wellness team worked hard to promote programs, services and messaging to encourage residents to be kind and stay connected to each other and the community.

Our service areas generally include:

- Community social development
- Volunteer Services - engaging residents with opportunities to support Town activities, programs and events
- The Okotoks Family Resource Centre - provides a host of supports to people including information on available services, referral to other programs, Volunteer Driver program for free out of town medical trips, Community Volunteer Income Tax, connection to emergency financial support, fee assistance, mental health first aid and other supportive connections to provide help with any issues people might face
- Administration of the Town's Community Access Program, providing subsidized taxi service to eligible residents along with low cost local trips offered through the On Demand Okotoks Transit program
- Affordable Housing initiatives

Community Wellness staff also provide liaison and support to community groups including United Way/Okotoks Partnership Committee, Healthy Okotoks Coalition and the Community Garden, the Foothills Children's Wellness Network, Rural Resiliency Action Partnership and more.



Some of the initiatives undertaken to strengthen social fabric and encourage social connection in this year included:

- The #okotoksstrongertogether continuation of branding, transitioning to #okotoksiskind branding and messaging through the website, social media channels and programs to highlight and promote connection and kindness.
- A drive through Seniors Week event complete with mugs, candy and virtual hugs and waves from Big Rocky, Town Councillors, the Mayor and the Dawgs. A bagpipe concert was played outside the seniors residences.
- Innovative ways to provide programs and services in a hybrid way of either in person or virtually to connect people with our programs and supports for Town residents were constantly being developed and adapted in 2022.
- Strengthening of a regional interagency seeing strong attendance from Foothills social agencies to share challenges, successes and provide supportive connections for staff
- FCSS provided \$421,780 to external social agencies including partnership with the Primary Care Network to provide a Youth Navigator that is connected with and offers supports to youth and their families.
- United Way/Okotoks Partnership, a hard working group of volunteers that drive the work, hosted activities and events to raise funds and awareness of social needs in the community. Again, the support of the business community was amazing.

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Okotoks Health & Wellness Centre – Shantel Hunter

Greetings from the Okotoks Health and Wellness Center. We are grateful for the continued collaboration with the Healthy Okotoks Coalition, and the ability to partner in a variety of initiatives that serve our community.

2022 was a year of innovation, growth and continued change at the Okotoks Health and Wellness Center.

We introduced an electronic medical record into the Urgent Care, which improves access to critical information and allows the health care team to serve our patients in a more efficient way. All of our teams continued to provide innovative and patient centered care as we navigated different phases of the pandemic. Our goal is to meet patients and clients where they are at through different modalities of care delivery.

We also saw the move of our Outpatient Lab services at the beginning of December to 200 Southridge Drive, Okotoks.

We are looking forward to a prosperous 2023, with diligent focus on accessible services and keeping our staff, patients + communities safe.

All the best from the teams at the Okotoks Health and Wellness Center.

Origin of HOC

The Healthy Communities movement was developed by the World Health Organization as a vehicle for achieving Health for All Through Primary Health Care (PHC), applying the principles of health promotion. The inspiration to embark on a healthy community process came in 1996 after several local (former) Headwaters Health Authority staff and Board members attended a conference in San Francisco. The conference theme that year was “Creating Healthier Communities”. A partnership was formed with the Town of the Okotoks and (former) Headwaters Health Authority, through a resolution by Town Council in 1996. A core group of people indicated an interest in establishing a health coalition. Membership was open to anyone interested in health and wellness for our community. In 1998, the Healthy Okotoks Coalition became an Alberta Incorporated Registered Society. This status allows for eligibility for grants and the ability to act as a fiscal agent for community partners.

Healthy Okotoks Coalition 2022 Board of Directors

President: Kim Pomares
Vice President: Zach Levacque
Secretary: Jaclyn Geddie & Donova Dundas
Treasurer: Rachel Pomares
Director: Linda Blasetti
Director: Oliver Hallmark
Director: Jesse Lavoie
Audit Committee: Ed Sands
Audit Committee: Bente Yanota
Town of Okotoks, Staff Liaison: Debbie Posey

Join us the 4th Tuesday of every month from 7pm-9pm at the Okotoks Centennial Arena in the Provincial Room

Everyone is Welcome!

Contact HOC via email at hoc@okotoks.ca or Telephone (403)995-2773