



## Building Caring Communities

### Our Mission

Our mission is to build more connected neighbourhoods where people are known and have relationships with others. We are trying to do two things:

- (1) Build unpaid networks of support (friends) around people, and connect individuals to activities and associations in their neighbourhoods.
- (2) Grow and thicken the ties of connection wherever we go.

We are a representation of organizations interested in building more caring communities. The organizations that are currently involved include: **posAbilities**, [Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion](#), [Simon Fraser Society for Community Living](#), [Inclusion Powell River Society](#), [Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network](#) and [Spectrum Society for Community Living](#).

We came together based on a grant from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, which made it possible to hire Joe Erpenbeck from the ABCD Institute. He is working with our agencies so that we can get better at this work.

### Why Are We Doing It

The people we support in services are often socially isolated. This can be shown in surveys and quality of life indices, particularly for persons with developmental disabilities. At the same time, there is considerable research that shows that social relationships are critical to our physical, mental and economic wellbeing. Our goal is to facilitate connections that will develop into friendships and meaningful relationships.

We use the Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) framework that was created by John McKnight and Jody Kretzmann at Northwestern University. This method focuses on the gifts or assets that are inherent in every person and in every neighbourhood.

The social services system often sees people in terms of the things they “need” and ignores all the great things they have to offer. Our work in building both relationships and community is based on the gifts, passions and skills that everyone brings with them. We work in neighbourhoods in search of places of hospitality and look for ways to support people in sharing their gifts with others.

For more information contact Joe Erpenbeck at 604-365-9113 or [joe@buildingcaringcommunities.ca](mailto:joe@buildingcaringcommunities.ca).

