

## Karey's Choice

By Carol Broomhall

Karey faced an interesting choice. As a parent with 3 children to support, would she choose a new job with stability? Or one that presented an unpredictable environment, but also opportunities for growth and development? Would she choose the security of a permanent position at Douglas College, or a Casual position with no guarantee of consistent work at BACI?

Karey's first glimpse of BACI was less than convincing. Her hiring interview was a marathon meeting that stretched over 3 hours – and 3 different rooms. Continual interruptions peppered the proceedings, from urgent phone calls for the senior staff leading the interview to being bumped along by other groups looking for meeting space.



Some may have run from the mayhem. As we now know, Karey embraced “the adventure” of BACI with open arms. Beyond the chaos, she recognized the meaningfulness of the work and the opportunity to positively impact people's lives.

After working as a Casual staff in all of the Day Programs – supporting people in the community, in residential services, and in the now-closed woodshop – she applied for a full-time position at Clinton House, which later led to a Supervisor's role there. When an opportunity arose to join the newly forming Life Sharing Team, she jumped at the opportunity and soon became Manager of that area. Her experience in all areas – and at all levels – of Direct Services eventually led her to become Senior Manager of all Direct Services.

But what led Karey to BACI in the first place?

It was an interesting path for someone who had studied graphic design at Emily Carr and drafting at Capilano University. Someone who had worked for an architect doing presentation drawings, and for a company organizing special events.

After she married and became a mother to 3 young children, Karey decided she wanted to better understand child development. Not content with reading a few library books, she earned her SEETA (Special Education Teacher Assistant) Certificate and later worked as a teaching assistant at a private school for 5 years.

After 5 years with the school, Karey felt it was time for something more challenging. There was no room to grow where she was, and no power to make change.

It was then that Karey began exploring other career options and found herself at the crossroads of choosing an unknown path at BACI or a comfortable one at Douglas College. We're happy she followed her passion for learning new things and joined the BACI community – developing her knowledge and leadership skills over the 10 years since she first said, “Yes!”

Karey believes the key element to her success at BACI is “being involved.” She joined the Wellness Team and volunteered at all BACI events – from United Way Campaigns to Summer Bar-B-Q's to Fundraising Galas. She always wanted to know more than just the people in the program in which she was working. “Maybe it was because I came from a Catholic school where community was so important,” says Karey. “Being present, building strong relationships with people, and becoming part of the larger BACI team has always been important to me.”

Karey says she has never been motivated to move up through the organization, and was always quite happy in her roles. But being a life-long learner and eager for challenges, she embraced opportunities when they presented themselves.

She continues to grow by participating in a Leadership Fellowship with Steve Patty, an expert in leadership development and evaluating impact.

Karey says, “After my job interview experience, I thought I'd never have a dull moment at BACI. And I haven't!”