

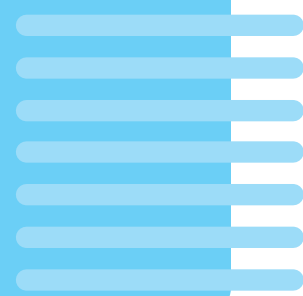
Together We Succeed

Annual Report
2022/23



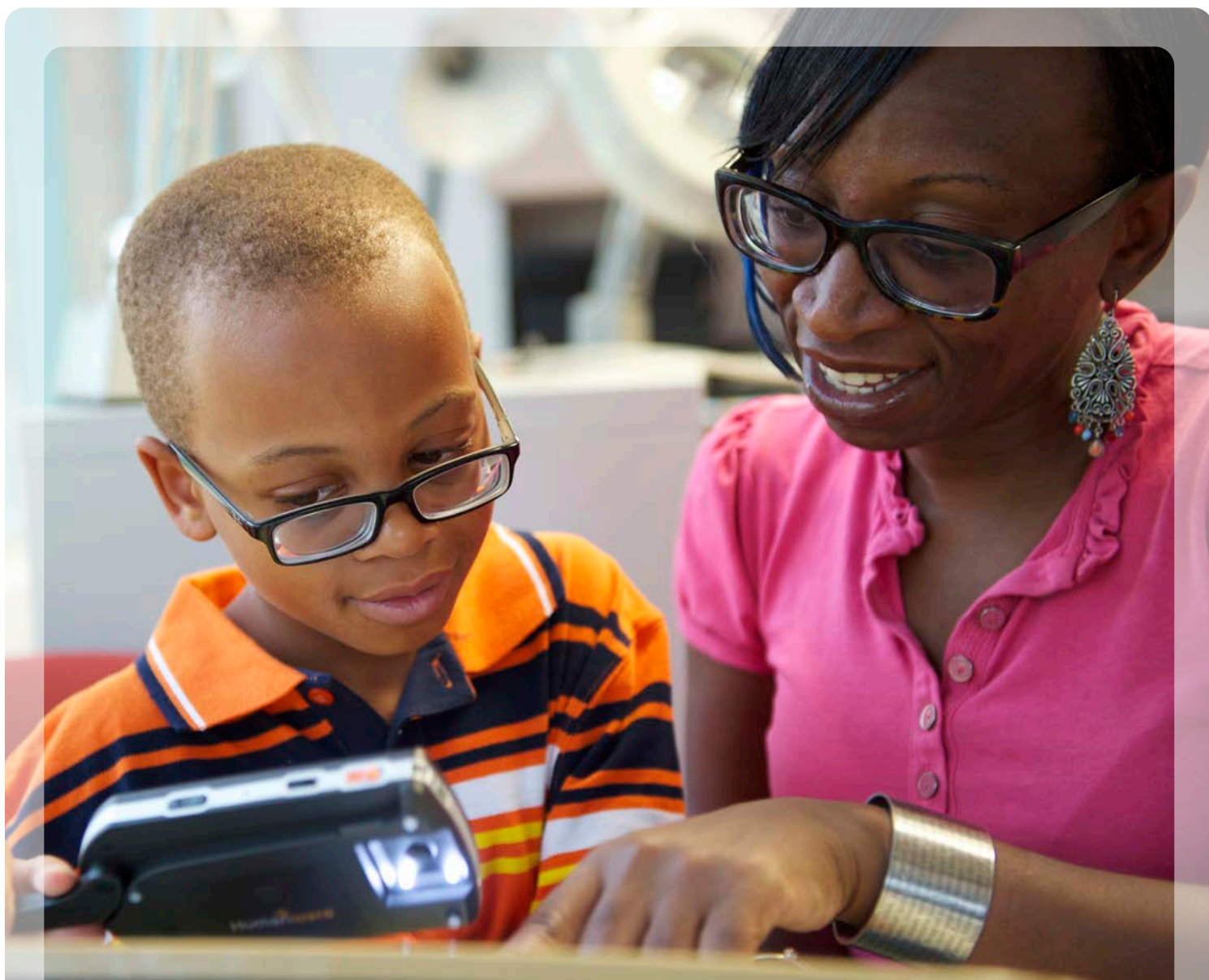
**VISION LOSS
REHABILITATION™**
CANADA

Working Together We Make Our Clients Stronger



Letter from the Board Chair and President & CEO

We find success when we learn to lean on other people. For some of our clients, accepting our offer of support can be scary when they're grappling with the unknown. But as we hear time and time again, the results can be life-changing. As we look back on the past year, we celebrate all the roles within Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada, working seamlessly together to deliver high-quality, integrated care for our clients from coast to coast to coast.



➔ In reflecting on the successes of the past year, we must highlight the pivotal role our dedicated team members play in the success of our clients' rehabilitation journeys. From the very first touchpoints, like those established with our client navigators, to the enduring partnerships formed with our vision rehabilitation and health service specialists, every team member contributes significantly to our clients' transformative experiences. We are incredibly grateful for their commitment and expertise, as it's through their collective efforts that we can deliver exceptional care and support.

Throughout this report, we will spotlight a diverse array of roles, each representing a vital piece of the puzzle that ensures our clients' rehabilitation journeys are smooth and interconnected experiences. This seamless collaboration allows us to create an integrated approach to care that empowers our clients to overcome challenges, embrace new opportunities, and experience life-changing results.

We also look back on the progress we've made in the past year. In the east, we celebrated the grand opening of our new office in Halifax. In British Columbia, we received accreditation from CARF International (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities), and we established a pilot partnership with the British Columbia Psychologists Association to integrate mental health support with our core services.

Meanwhile in Ontario, we presented the Kingston Health Sciences Centre's (KHSC) Ophthalmology Department with the inaugural VLRC Distinguished Community Partner Award, recognizing the organization's focus on patient-centric care, and commitment to serving the vision loss community.

All of these successes happen when we work together as a team - sharing information, looking for ways to innovate, and always building those relationships that make us stronger as an organization, within the communities we serve, and with our clients.

Together, we will continue to promote innovation, champion collaboration, and advocate for accessible, integrated rehabilitation and health care services, paving the way towards a brighter future for all.



John Magill
Board Chair



Jennifer Urosevic
President & CEO

Highlights

Partnerships and new initiatives from coast to coast to coast



Helping children develop skills in summer

➔ Newfoundland's Summer Intervention Program enables families to hire intervenors to work with their children on individual goals for six weeks during the summer months. In 2022, 17 children participated in the program, which is designed to help kids who are blind or partially sighted develop new skills, encourage integration through group activities with other children, and promote independence.

Supporting digital literacy

➔ Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada (VLRC) will now be able to provide even more technology skills training thanks to a successful funding application to the Digital Literacy Exchange Program, a federal initiative to support not-for-profit organizations in helping Canadians access digital technology and training. Over two years, the \$118,000 annual funding will support two assistive technology specialist positions as well as staff professional development, greatly enhancing VLRC's technology training abilities in Manitoba.



Partnership to increase employment access

➔ In New Brunswick, VLRC has secured new funding contracts to deliver employment services for the next five years. As a member of the avenueNB cooperative, VLRC will be able to increase access to educational opportunities and disability-specific services, and support employers in creating inclusive workplaces.

Portable assessments make testing more accessible

➔ In Ontario, a strategic initiative is making assistive technology assessments more accessible to clients. Portable assessment kits, managed by our assistive technology team, reduce travel-related barriers and enable us to serve more clients effectively, efficiently, and closer to home. A trial of virtual assessments is also in progress. These moves provide better client experiences and significantly boost fee-for-service revenue through the Assistive Devices Program (ADP).



VLRC is an approved prescriber in Alberta

➔ In partnership with CNIB, VLRC in Alberta has now been added to the approved prescriber list for assistive devices and technology through the Non-Insured Health Benefit (NIHB). By expanding the number of approved prescribers, the move will provide Albertans with more options for accessing these technologies. VLRC's approved prescriber status is valid across the country where NIHB benefits are recognized.

BC announces partnership with First Nations Health Authority

➔ In British Columbia, we're teaming up with the First Nations Health Authority and Pacific Blue Cross to determine client access to VLRC services for indigenous clients across British Columbia. The partnership will be guided by leaders in B.C.'s First Nations Communities.

Supporting Remote Communities

VLRC's Eye Van program celebrates over 50 years on the road

It's a good day when the Eye Van rolls into town. Serving northern Ontario communities since 1972, the team starts its seasonal road trip at the end of April and wraps in October, serving 20 communities and 5,000 patients over the course of 28 weeks. That's a lot of support for areas where patients might otherwise have to travel many hours to get care. Some might not even get their testing done at all if it weren't for the services brought to them by the Eye Van.



➔ The Eye Van team is comprised of intermediate secretary Kelsey Cheff; program assistant and driver A.J. Johnston; and Purnashree Chowdhury and Ryan Williams, both ophthalmic assistants. Williams is on his second tour with the Eye Van and Chowdhury just joined in May.

Staying in local motels and travelling mostly in the van itself, this year the team is making the rounds from Englehart through Little Current, spending as little as half a week in smaller communities to as many as four weeks in larger centres like Kapuskasing and Hearst, with the average stop being about a week.

While dubbed the Eye Van, the vehicle is actually a transport truck with a full mobile lab inside. The Eye Van typically parks beside a local hospital or sometimes a legion hall or other gathering place, and serves 35 to 45 patients a day, mostly returning clients. Inside is a fully equipped medical clinic, with the tools needed to do a comprehensive assessment from checking visual acuity and eye pressures to taking images and even doing minor laser procedures.



Chowdhury, whose first trip in the Eye Van was to Kapuskasing, five hours north of Sudbury, did medical training in her home country of Bangladesh and previously worked at the Toronto Foundation for Student Success assisting schools in screening for vision problems. She says she sees a lot of rare cases in the remote communities in addition to more common eye conditions like glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, or cataracts.

“I was really interested in joining VLRC. My home is in Toronto and on the road you see patients and [eye] diseases you don’t see in the cities because there you go to specialized treatment centres,” she says, adding that the care is really appreciated by remote patients.

“People there are so grateful; in the cities you don’t appreciate what a lack of health care can be, but they do,” she says, noting that she’s had patients tell her they clear their schedules for the time of year when the Eye Van will arrive. Clients also leave cards and sweets for the team.

Williams hears the same comments. “People are very thankful. A lot would have to travel three to six hours to Sudbury or Timmins or Toronto. For some of these people it’s their [only] option to health care, as that might not be feasible,” says Williams. “It’s one of the most rewarding things I’ve done.”

Our Staff Make Us Strong

Every role makes a difference at VLRC:
here are two that connect with clients

Client navigator, Donna Buffet-Johnson

For many people with vision loss, client navigator Donna Buffet-Johnson is the first voice they hear on the phone after a diagnosis. Her friendly tone and manner puts them at ease.



➔ “Often people are afraid or angry, so chatting gives a chance to relay their story,” says Buffet-Johnson, who is based in Halifax.

Over the hour-long intake call, Buffet-Johnson gets them to open up about their diagnosis and their goals.

Goals can include everything from reading a book to retraining on how to use their sewing machine to navigating their way to their dentist.

Next, she assigns the client to the most relevant specialist, whether that be a primary service provider that can help add tactile elements to their microwave buttons or an independent living specialist who trains on safety-related tasks like pouring hot water for tea.

Buffet-Johnson says she loves her job because it’s the first step to helping clients out of fear towards a solution. Her most satisfying moment comes at the end of her call, when she hears a changed attitude towards the support they will receive from VLRC.

“I love that I hear people say they’re looking forward to it. That’s huge to me, that I can make someone feel more comfortable,” she says.

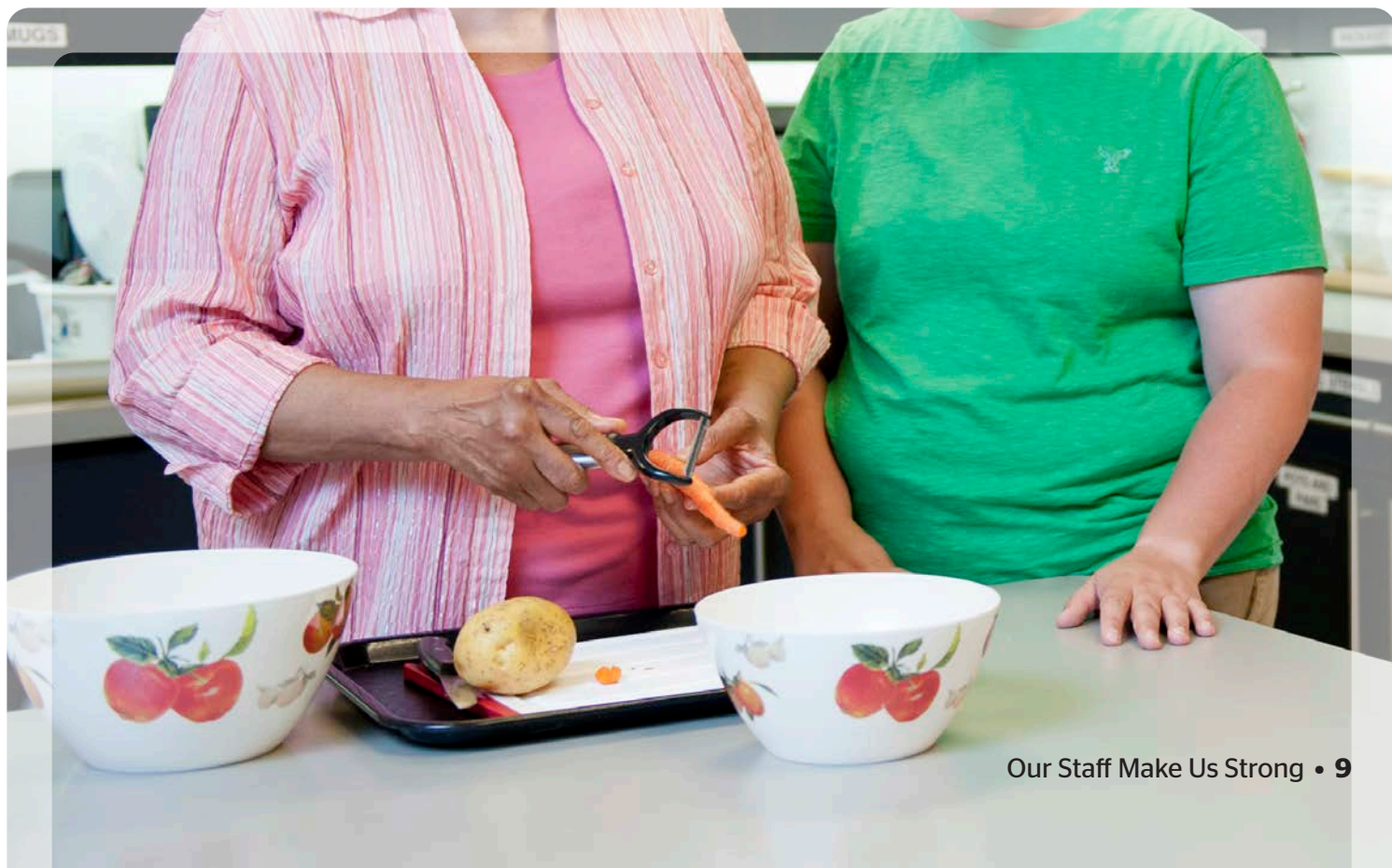
Vision rehabilitation assistant, Christine Mans

Vision rehabilitation assistant Christine Mans loves being part of her clients' learning trajectories, which is at the heart of her role. As the first point of contact after the vision specialist referral, vision rehabilitation assistants get to witness the sense of accomplishment as clients learn new ways to complete tasks that used to be automatic but may now feel impossible.

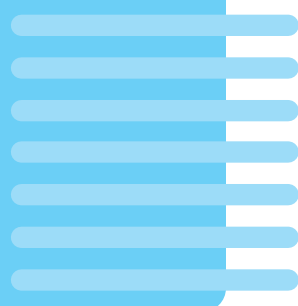
➔ Mans, who serves clients in Victoria, B.C., and the surrounding area, gives the example of buttering a piece of toast. One of her tips is to split a pound of butter into an ice cube tray to make individual servings. Just a small tip, but it makes life so much easier. Other areas where vision rehabilitation assistants help include independent living, household management, indoor orientation, and basic technology. They also encourage family members to join in. For example, a family member can be reminded to close kitchen cupboard doors after use, so the client doesn't bang their head.

Mans takes seriously the need to develop trust with clients, blocking off five or 10 minutes at the beginning of the home visit for a chat.

"It gives me the opportunity to build a relationship with the client first." She knows her clients feel satisfied at their accomplishments. "A common word they use is 'encouraged'. They feel happy, there's a lot of positive feedback."



By The Numbers



Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada proudly serves people with vision loss from coast to coast. Here's a snapshot of our impact last year:

Reach and impact

Total clients served
26,000+

New clients referred
8,200+

Total service hours delivered
222,000+

Clients by age

Children and youth
2,400+

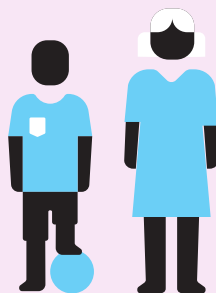
Working age
8,100+

Seniors
15,500+

Service hours delivered



37% Primary Services for people adjusting to vision loss.



18% Children's services, vocational rehabilitation, and emotional support.



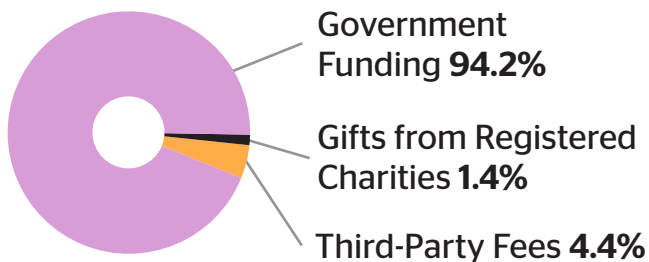
45% Specialized Services for people with profound vision loss.

Financials & Board of Directors

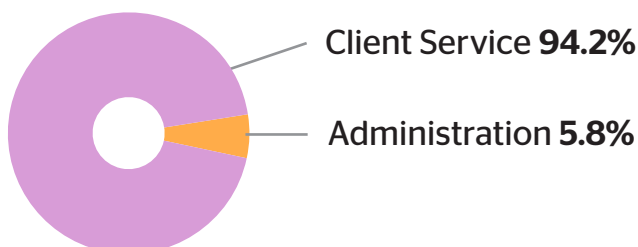
Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada takes pride in upholding the highest standard of ethics and accountability in stewarding the funding we receive from our provincial government partners.

Our financial statements for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2023 were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and were audited by Ernst & Young LLP.

Operating Revenue



Operating Expenses



Our Board of Directors is comprised of industry leaders in a variety of fields across Canada, all of whom are dedicated to supporting our vital mission.

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Finance Committee Chair

Daniel Zbacnik

Service Quality Committee Chair

Betty Nobel

Governance Committee Chair

Dr. Tanya Packer

People & Culture Committee

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Vision Loss Rehabilitation Canada (VLRC) is a not-for-profit national health care organization and the leading provider of rehabilitation therapy and health care services for individuals with vision loss.



Visit visionlossrehab.ca

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**VISION LOSS
REHABILITATION™**
CANADA

Stronger Together



Together, we support and stand by Canadians who are blind, partially sighted, or Deafblind.