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# THANKFUL FOR AN EXCELLENT WORKFORCE

## SAVE THE DATE!

Join us on Tuesday November 22nd, 2016 at the *Communitas provincial office for our Annual General Meeting*. More than a business meeting, you'll hear more inspiring stories like the ones here and learn about all the great things that have been happening in our organization for the past year. Save the date and stay tuned for more details!



If there's one thing that Justina Penner loves to do, it's to offer encouragement and support to others. It is this quality that brought her to Abbotsford to care for her aging father. It's what informed her career direction, caring for children and youth and caring for people with mental health challenges.

And it's what brought her to Communitas. For Justina, the opportunity to work in a place that seeks to support, encourage, and care for others with genuine compassion was irresistible.

"I love that we look at the whole person, not just a person's diagnosis," she explains. "I love that we see all people as created by God, that people with disabilities have equal value. Our faith base informs that and that's important to me."

For the last 17 years Justina has been giving direction to the Human Resources Department and she has found this work to be very satisfying.

**“ I’ve always loved helping people. Now I help staff to grow and learn and we support them as they support the people we serve.”**

She recognizes that the most important resource that Communitas has is its dedicated workforce. Finding the right people takes time but it is always worth it. When Justina and her HR team are looking at resumes and conducting interviews, they are looking at much more than education and training.

"We can teach someone how to complete certain tasks but we cannot teach compassion, care or integrity," she says.

Finding the right people means looking beyond the text on a resume to a person's life experiences and the way in which job-seekers answer the thoughtful questions in the application process.

Justina firmly believes that the reason Communitas has grown to have over 400 staff serving more than 500 people across the province is because the organization has excellent staff who provide quality care day in and day out. This commitment to excellence is self-perpetuating.

"If you have good people who make up teams that are committed to excellent care, then you've got positive peer pressure that demands all members of that team are committed to the same standards," she says.

And maintaining that excellent workforce also means supporting staff so that they can do their jobs to the best of their ability and reminding them regularly that they too are valued and appreciated. Essentially, it is applying the same care and

compassion to the staff that they provide to the people Communitas serves. It all comes back to giving encouragement and offering support.

"That's a wonderful part of my job," Justina says, with a huge smile on her face.



### Working at Communitas

offers me the opportunity to develop my managerial skills, to maintain a balanced lifestyle with my family and provides me the opportunity to have spiritual input daily into the lives of our residents.

– Barb Rusu, manager Topaz, Chilliwack.



**I love the sense of belonging and being part of something essential and life giving.**

– Wendy Toohey, manager Matthew's House, Abbotsford.



**I am provided with the opportunity**

to affect the people I serve, while practicing Communitas values which are aligned with my own. I'm encouraged to use my strengths and passions in creative ways to support the people we serve. Person-centered practices and an emphasis on belonging creates a family like environment; this makes Communitas a very welcoming and inviting organization to work for.

– Micah Reimer, mental health worker, Abbotsford.



**From the moment I started at Communitas I experienced a sense of belonging.**

I feel very fortunate to be a part of such a remarkable and diverse group of people who work together in an uplifting way. – Michelle de Jong, Brandon Centre, North Island.



**I love the people I work with. The Communitas family is practically my second family. Great people attract great people!**

– Albert Mackoty, accounting assistant, provincial office Abbotsford.



**I love working for Communitas**

because the work is really about connecting with people. Our clients enrich my life and inspire me to commit whole heartedly to my own life goals. I can only hope to reciprocate the same inspiration. – Amanda Lind, support worker, Abbotsford.



**Not only do I get to be a part of the lives of the individuals we support, but I also get to see the diversity and growth within the staff that come on board with Communitas.**

– Lindsay Morris, Brandon Centre, North Island.



**I am given the chance to grow and develop my skills and abilities. I feel safe to make mistakes and learn from them as I'm doing this!**

– Elli Hiebert, HR manager, provincial office, Abbotsford.



# WE LOVE COMMUNITAS!



# WORK WITH MEANING BY PEOPLE WHO CARE

Communitas has changed me. I am not the same person I was five years ago when I first applied for a job with this organization. More accurately, it is the people of Communitas who have influenced the changes in me.



“Communitas looks to be a place for every individual to belong, grow, and contribute.”

Today, I think I am a gentler, more compassionate person because, as I have watched the people working around me, I have been inspired and challenged to be like them. I can embrace the people-centered philosophy we ascribe to as I learn to slow down and focus on the person sitting in front of me instead of rushing on to the next “task” that needs to be completed.

And I am discovering that our mission to create a place of belonging, growth and contribution looks very different when we see a person, first, and a disability – or ability - second.

At Communitas we often describe our mission statement in terms of the people we support, but our mission statement is equally important as staff members, board directors, stakeholders and volunteers. Communitas looks to be a place for every individual to belong, grow and contribute – whether they are paid or unpaid; supported or supporting; staying for a long time or just passing through.

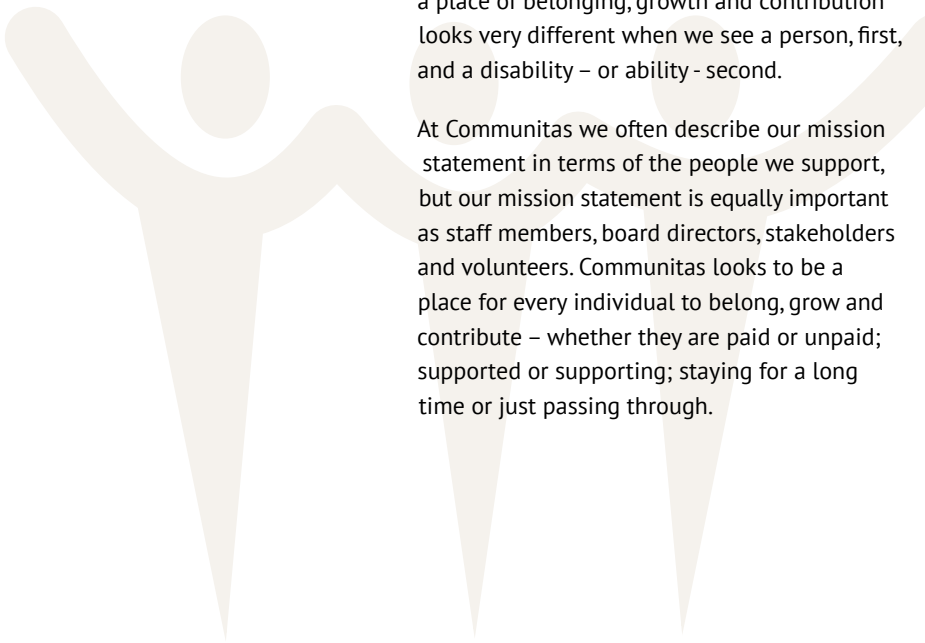
Our hope is that working with meaning alongside people who care has a life-changing effect on us, on others and on our communities.

Through this issue of the FOCUS we are inviting you to “join us” in a variety of ways.

Considering a work environment you will enjoy? Then come check us out. Looking for a great volunteer opportunity? Give us a call. And if you simply wish to know more about us,

check out our new website or find out more by joining us at the AGM on November 22, 2016. We welcome you to experience Communitas for yourself.

By Karyn Santiago  
Chief Executive Officer





# VOLUNTEER WITH US!

“Volunteers strengthen our community and enrich our work. There are several ways that you can contribute to the work of Communitas or you may have your own creative idea that you’d like to share with us.



### Become a Community Ambassador

When you volunteer at events and fundraisers, you help us connect with our community and raise awareness.



### Become a Volunteer Companion

When you spend time in our programs, taking part in activities and getting to know the people we serve, you’ll discover that companionship is a mutually enriching experience.



### Find a Practicum Placement

Complete school credit, support our staff and enrich the people we serve. Communitas can facilitate a placement to meet your passions and studies. Share the requirements of your program with us and we can explore options together.

## CLICK HERE!

If you’ve visited [CommunitasCare.com](http://CommunitasCare.com) lately you’ll have noticed our complete new look. Working together with Jeremy Lind of Viewpoint Digital Design and Development, we’ve created a warm, inviting and informative website that will tell our story and encourage people to join with us. Check it out and send us your feedback!





**LEARN** more about our ministry when you visit our website  
[CommunitasCare.com](http://CommunitasCare.com)

**JOIN** our staff team or become a contracted caregiver.  
Visit [CommunitasCare.com/careers](http://CommunitasCare.com/careers)

**GIVE** to support programs for people living with a disability.  
Visit [CommunitasCare.com/donate](http://CommunitasCare.com/donate)

**HIRE** our shredding or recycling services.  
Visit [CommunitasEnterprises.com](http://CommunitasEnterprises.com)

**BECOME** a member. Email [members@CommunitasCare.com](mailto:members@CommunitasCare.com)

## YOU CAN JOIN US TOO!



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