

## **In memory of our founder - Lionel Trafford Wace, September 23, 1919- March 2, 2012**

On this 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the passing of our founder, Lionel Wace, Kelowna & District S.H.A.R.E. Society would like to take this opportunity to recognize how the leadership and vision of one man 45 years ago could have a lasting impact on his beloved community.

Lionel joined the BC Ministry of Social Welfare in 1963, where he was appointed Kelowna District Supervisor, a position he held for over 25 years. In 1977, Lionel mobilized a group of volunteers who came together to assist with the integration of refugees coming into Kelowna at that time. Although this small group of like-minded individuals started by gathering material donations to give to those in need, the movement quickly grew to provide other forms of support, including employment skills training to assist in promoting self-sufficiency and independence among those experiencing challenges. This newly created grassroots initiative was first known as the Association for Self-Help (ASH), and in 1980, was renamed the Kelowna & District S.H.A.R.E. Society (Self-Help through Arts, Recreations and Education), a non-sectarian organization with charity status. Guided by its self-help philosophy, S.H.A.R.E. Society was able to offer many programs over the years, including training in appliance repair, in a woodworking and in printing; it also offered financial counselling services and a low-cost rental housing registry.

As donations continued to pour in, community and social agencies began referring their clients for support with clothing, household goods and furniture; and, because of the continued generosity of the Kelowna community, S.H.A.R.E. was able to open a thrift store that would sell surplus stock. The proceeds generated through these sales served to support program delivery, reflecting the commitment of S.H.A.R.E. Society founders to the promise that 100% of proceeds from donations would always go back to the Kelowna & District community, in one form or another.

Although some things may have changed somewhat over the past forty-five years, S.H.A.R.E. Society continues to remain true to its grassroots values. It still operates a thrift store, but it is now much bigger. While still relying on support from 80+ volunteers, S.H.A.R.E. employs 16 staff, 50 % of which are people with diverse abilities or other challenges to employment. 80% of the revenues from the sales of items are used to support program delivery. The remainder is used to operate the warehouse, which handles the donations, and to pay the thrift store staff. Our program activities have also continued to align with Lionel's vision, in that we now have over 30 community and social agencies referring their clients to our Community Assistance Program for donations of material goods. Since our inception we have developed our Adopt-a-Family Program, which this year alone has sponsored 115 families and distributed 100 - \$10 gift cards to the homeless and to those in shelters. Consistent with the 'self-help' model approach to poverty reduction, we offer a variety of retail skills training programs (Details of Retail Introductory Program - DRIP), adapted to meet individual needs. Participants include adults with identified barriers to employment, youth with diverse abilities transitioning from high school, youth with autism and vulnerable women looking to enter the work force, many for the first time.

Kelowna & District S.H.A.R.E. Society wishes to thank all of our supporters, from our committed Board of Directors, our staff and volunteers, our customers, all the community and social agencies with which we partner and of course all those in the community who continue to donate to our cause.

Above all, it is with great appreciation that we wish to acknowledge the memory of Lionel Trafford Wace, without whom Kelowna & District S.H.A.R.E. Society would likely not exist!

**Janine Makar, Executive Director, March 2022**