



# Annual Report | 2023

# Territorial Acknowledgement

The Victoria Pride Society acknowledges that it organizes and works on the traditional territories of the Lekwungen peoples, and that the land's historical relationships with the Songhees, Esquimalt and WSÁNEĆ peoples have existed since time immemorial. Further to this acknowledgement, the Victoria Pride Society affirms that colonialism, and the attitudes and practices that have accompanied it, contributes to systemic discrimination and violence against Indigenous Peoples.

## Message from our Board

Every year, we are always so happy to see Victoria embrace Pride is a big way! Our events again broke attendance records with over 100,000 people attending Victoria Pride Festival events between June 29 and July 9. These events were opportunities for local gender, sexual and relationship diverse communities to be visible, connect and celebrate. We would like to extend our sincere thanks to those who helped make Victoria Pride happen - our volunteers, members, partners, vendors, participants and staff.

Our focus this year was to build organizational capacity so that we can continue to produce high-quality, accessible events that centre the most marginalized voices in our communities. We are thrilled to be welcoming back many key members of our 2023 team and work is already well underway to prepare for the 2024 Victoria Pride Festival. Next year will mark the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Pride Parade in Victoria and we look forward to seeing everyone at our favourite Pride events while we explore opportunities to bring new events to our communities.

# 2022-2023 Victoria Pride Team

## Board of Directors

**President:** Scott Daly

**Vice-President:** Liz da Mata

**Vice-President:** Ace Mann

**Treasurer:** Michael Keeghan

**Executive Administrator:** Ace Mann

**Director at Large:** Nick Luney

**Director at Large:** Jo McFetridge

**Director at Large:** Mark Overton-Paszek

## Pride Leaders

**Festival Director:** Kelly Kurta

**Assistant Festival Director:** Gala Vega

**Parade Coordinator:** Sloane Chomeakwich

**Communications Manager:** Cristin Platt

**Social Media Coordinator:** Rae Scott

**Graphic Designer:** Heather Zeh

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Jayden Grieve

**Event Coordinator:** Jay Reinstein

**Event Coordinator:** Mackenzie Robin

**Communications Coordinator:** Pamphinette Buisa

**Youth Coordinator:** Silke Staffeldt

# 2023 Highlights

## **Youth Report**

Victoria Pride's Youth Council continues to be active to create opportunities for 2SLGBTQIA+ youth to connect and find community. The council organized a successful Masquerade-themed event at Odd Fellows Hall to kick off the Victoria Pride Festival on June 29. The council also organized another successful activism night where local activists discussed self-empowerment and social justice issues.

The council also made connections with and provided support for Gender and Sexual Alliances at many local schools.

## **Community Engagement Report**

This year, our Committee Engagement Committee had a new chair and a new vision! We kicked off in January with a dozen members and had more people come in and out throughout the year. The purpose of the group is to consider what kinds of support the communities are missing and either network to make sure people can find the support they need or work to bring it about ourselves. It was through this committee and conversations our chair had with community members that got us talking with the Vicious Poodle about the need for more "sapphic" spaces and shortly afterwards, U-Haul night was born (thanks Henrietta Dubét!).

While many events were discussed and planned—keep an eye out in 2024 for the fruits of these labours!—our crowning jewel was an idea for a new Victoria Pride Society sponsored parade contingent called "My First Pride"! The idea came to us from committee member Alan and was proposed to help those new to the experience find others on a similar path. We had an excellent turnout for the contingent and we even made the paper later that day! Parade members were

also given a pin to commemorate the occasion (thanks to the 2023 members of our communications team, Heather Zeh and Cristin Platt, for the help with the pins!).

In 2024, the group will be meeting every other month and continuing to evolve along with the members who attend and the community we serve. The wishlist this year includes a queer prom, planning for a fundraising gala, having a monthly queer wellness space, partnering with existing groups like Queers and Beers YYJ, and working with Crystal Pool to have a queer, trans\* and gender non-conforming swim. We encourage anyone and everyone to reach out if they'd like a way to be more involved over the course of the year.

### **Pride Scholarship**

The Victoria Pride Society bursary awarded over \$1600 to a Biochemistry student at the University of Victoria for the 2022-2023 academic year. This bursary was begun by former VPS President David Tillson and awards funds to deserving 2SLGBTQIA+ students.

### **Partnership Report**

I think it goes without saying that our partners' contributions have been amazing this year! Our partnership donations have surpassed \$160,000.00 with a total of \$51,500.00 cash donations and \$140,737.50 in-kind donations. We've maintained more than 50% of our 2022 partners and have brought on nearly 35% new partners. While I'd love to mention each and every partner by name, the following list displays a short list of a few legacy partners and new partners who've helped make this year successful:

- City of Victoria
- TD

- Government of Canada
- BCAA
- Bell Media
- Destination Greater Victoria
- Hotel Zed
- Pattison Media
- Victoria Bug Zoo

## Victoria Pride Festival 2023

The 2023 Victoria Pride Festival set a lot of records. We produced five signature festival events in addition to two youth-focused events.

The Victoria Pride Parade saw an estimated 70,000 participants and attendees on a new route down Douglas Street in addition to many more on Chek TV. While we were disappointed to see many hateful stickers and posters had been posted along the route before the parade, we are thankful to the volunteers and community members that worked together to remove them before the start time.

The Victoria Pride Festival in the Park saw over 30,000 attendees, 150 vendors, a kids stage and play area, a DIY art exhibit, beverage services, 20 food options, secure bike parking and more. Over 50 of the best local 2SLGBTQIA+ and ally performers provided over 6 hours of entertainment. This year's addition of a sober area, chill zone and games area in a new layout was well received and we look to build on this for 2024.

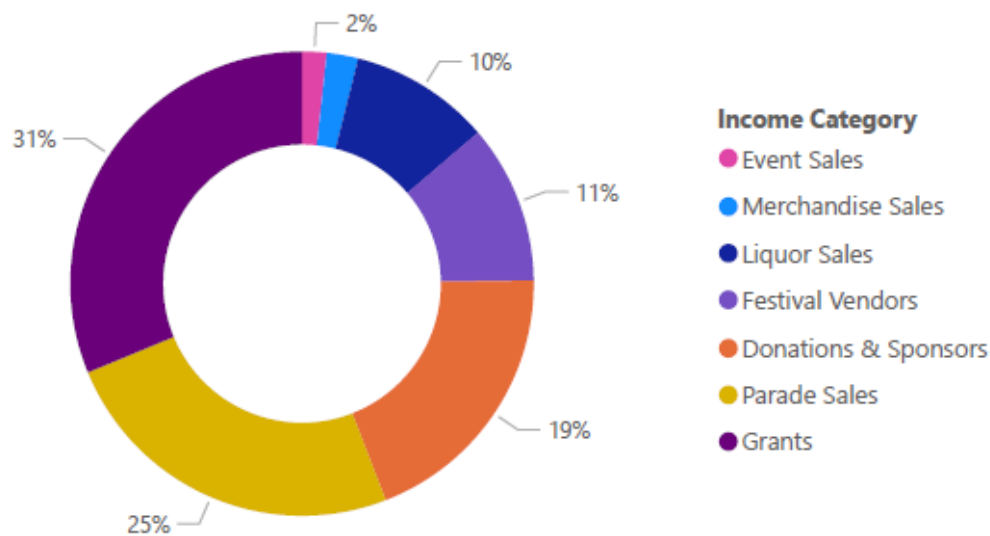
The Memorial Drag Ball Game returned to Victoria West Park on July 1 with a thrilling game of antics and community connection. Pride in the Word, hosted by Fierce Brosnan, brought together queer writers from across the province to

discuss their work and read from their most recent publications. The Big Gay Dog Walk saw over 2,000 folks and their best friends at Clover Point for a relaxed community gathering. While the new venue worked well in many ways, the high winds at times were a challenge and we are looking at alternative locations for 2024.

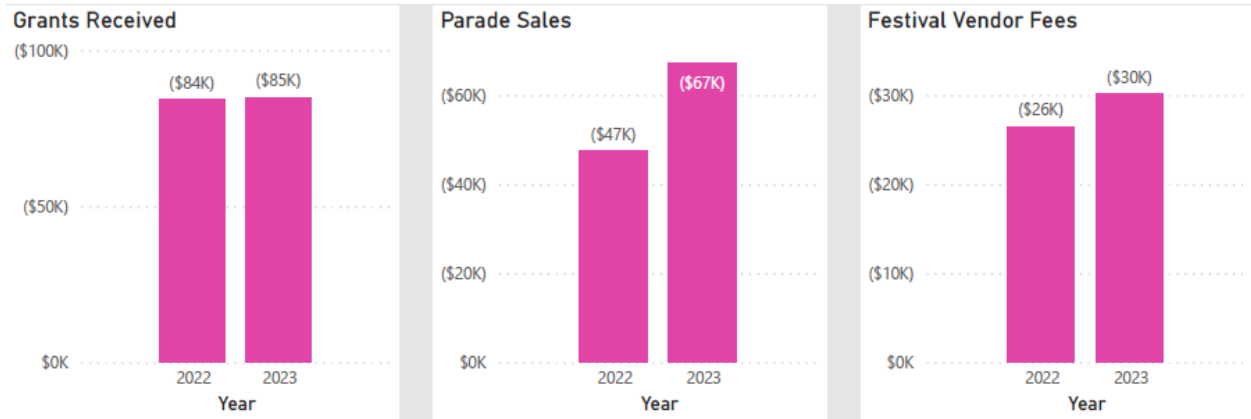
## Financial Report

Over the past year, the Victoria Pride Society has experienced tangible growth in several key financial areas with revenue surpassing \$278,000. Our parade revenue has significantly increased, reflecting a successful turnout and engagement from the community. Vendor sales have also seen a modest rise. Notably, our grant funding has remained consistent with the previous year, providing a reliable financial base for our activities.

### Income Sources

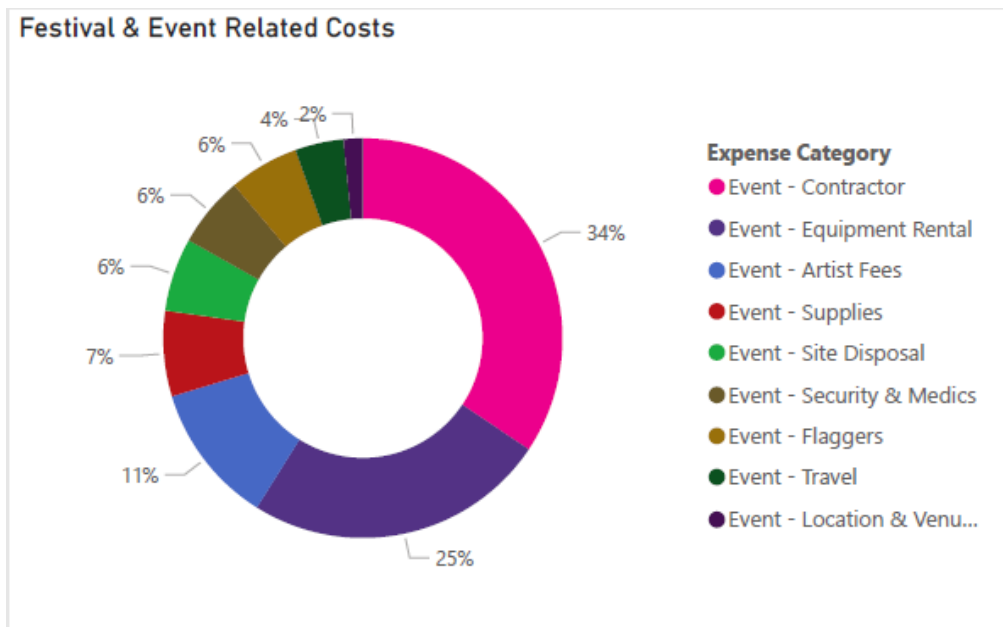


The introduction of cashless donations was a new initiative for us this year and led to a 50% increase in donation revenue and was well received by attendees.



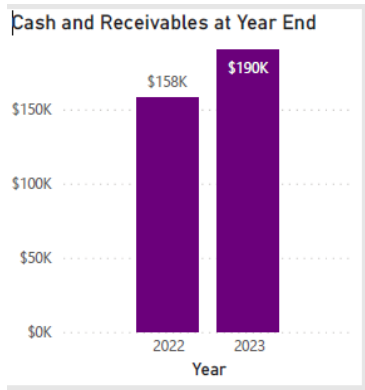
## Expenses

We have managed our festival and parade-related expenses prudently, keeping them closely in line with the previous year's costs, which reflects our commitment to careful financial planning. This year's expenditures were just over \$250,000.



Our current cash and receivables balance is substantial, serving as a rainy-day fund. We are actively seeking ways to maximize the return on these funds while maintaining their accessibility.





This year, we were the recipients of a \$23,000 security grant from the federal government-administered fund, part of a larger \$1.5 million support package for Pride organizations across Canada. This grant has helped us cover the increased security costs necessary to create a safe environment for our events.

The Victoria Pride Society continues to benefit from the amazing support of local businesses, organizations, and individuals. Their ongoing contributions are crucial to the success of our events and to the vibrancy of our community. We are incredibly thankful for this support and look forward to continuing these partnerships.

Please note that the figures highlighted above and included in the graphics are not final and are still subject to revision as part of our year-end account preparation with MNP.

## Thank You To Our Retiring Board Members

**Liz da Mata** – Liz has contributed so much to Victoria Pride over her 6 years on the Board, including serving as Treasurer and co-Vice President. A frequent host of Victoria Pride team gatherings, Liz's insights and calm approach will be missed. Liz also brought in many partners to the organization through her connections with the local business community. We wish Liz the very best and cannot thank her enough for all of her work and commitment over the years.

**Mark Overton-Paszek** – In his two years on the Board, Mark has made a tremendous contribution. In addition to being a thoughtful and strong voice at the board table, he completely overhauled our approach to partnership. This included the development of a partnership model that incorporated an organization's contributions to the gender, sexual and relationship diverse communities throughout the year in addition to their support of VPS. We are also very thankful for Mark's leadership in leading board discussions on strategic planning. We wish Mark the best as he pursues his MBA!