



## Summary Report of 2023-24 Fiscal Year

### Member Support Team

The past year saw changes in the Member Support team:

- Barb Montgomery who has been with us since 2021 stepped away to pursue other opportunities. We thank Barb for her many contributions.
- Suzanne Klassen was hired in June and joins Suzy Thomas as our member support team.
- Over the year, it is estimated that Member Support responded to over 3,000 emails and 2,500 telephone calls from members and their families.

### New Memberships

The past year welcomed over 1,300 new members to the Memorial Society of BC.

- This represents an 11% increase in new memberships compared to the previous year.
- The majority of new members continue to come to us through word of mouth. Many thanks to current members for continuing to refer family, friends, neighbours and colleagues.

### Outreach

- One of the changes in the past year was to include more hours for member support staff to assist with outreach. This includes contacting organizations, staffing booths at community events as well as making presentations.
- This past spring, we also brought on an additional staff resource on a small contract to explore outreach to diverse cultural and faith communities in BC.
- In limited hours, outreach was conducted to 70 organizations representing Indigenous, Chinese, Muslim, Sikh communities as well as others – with a summary report that includes a number of recommendations that we hope to build on.

### Death Rate

In the past year, over 800 members and their loved ones used the services of one of our contracted funeral providers, in communities across the province.

- This represents 10% fewer deaths than recorded in the previous year.
- This is not a reflection on MSBC. The death rate has generally been lower across the province in 2024. It may be that the death rate in BC is normalizing after 3-4 years of COVID related deaths.

### **Contracted Funeral Providers**

- A major piece of work last winter was renewing provider agreements with our existing contracted funeral providers.
- We are pleased to share that all our providers chose to continue to partner with us except for one. Yates on Vancouver Island ended their agreement with us and it was announced soon afterwards that they were bought by Service Corporation International (SCI).
- In 2024, two new funeral providers entered agreements with the Memorial Society:
  - **Cypress Funeral Services:** based out of Kamloops and serving the communities of the Thompson Nicola Regional District, including Kamloops, Merritt, Chase, Logan Lake and others.
  - **A Simple Cremation:** based in Maple Ridge and serving the communities of the Mission, Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows, and the Tri-Cities

### **Education**

Education on end of life continues to be an important part of our mandate. This past year included:

- Four (4) issues of Memo, our quarterly newsletter, with important updates, as well as featured articles on Green Burial, At Home Deaths, and overviews of BC Consumer Protection, and Nidus Resource.
- Close to 50 social media posts on Facebook and Instagram with interesting and relevant articles and events on important end-of-life issues.
- Further updates to our website as an invaluable resource to members and the public.

**Moving Forward** - In the coming year, there are 4 areas of focus:

1. Identify and develop new partnerships with funeral providers in areas in BC in which we do not currently have a strong presence. For example, this includes northwestern BC as well as the region north of Vernon.
2. Build our membership base by exploring print and digital marketing. As part of strategy, we are trialing:
  - A digital ad on Castanet, targeting the Kelowna area.
  - A print ad in The Peak, serving Powell River region.
3. Explore new fundraising opportunities. Currently, our revenue comes from memberships and service fees paid by our contracted providers.
  - One of our first successes is securing Stanley Park Pavilion as a sponsor for our AGM. This included an advertisement in our quarterly newsletter.
4. Continue to build website as an educational resource.