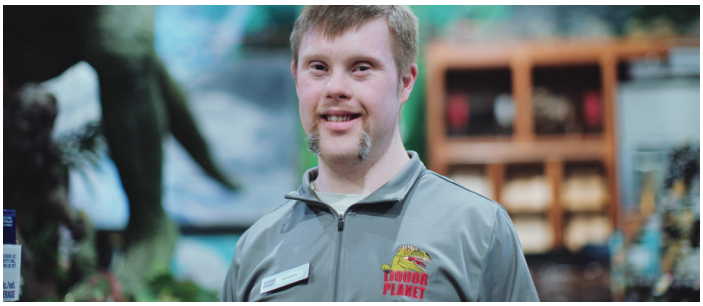










Annual Report

2025 – 2026





A life, a home, and a place in the world



Garth Homer
SOCIETY



A Letter from the CEO and Board Chair





A year ago, the move to SJ Willis was still a plan on paper. Today, all six of our Darwin-based programs operate out of this location – and this move has also enabled the emergence of a new seventh program: Willow. This move was the most complex and monumental undertaking carried out by the Society to date. Lead by Executive Director of Client Services Kevin Steeple, and championed by the Team Coordinators, Community Support Workers, and Facilities staff, we experienced one of the most successful and well-supported transitions this organization has ever seen. We owe great thanks as well to the families who helped prepare and support clients for the move, and of course huge accolades, respect, and admiration for all the clients who embraced the new chapter with a sense of discovery, courage, and peer support.

With our new temporary location, and with the committed support from the Garth Homer Foundation, our doors are open wider than ever: All Abilities Hockey league and tournament drawing teams from across the Island and the Lower Mainland; Open Mic nights; a new drama program with Delusional Productions; ScienceWorks; Future Forge in Oak Bay and Spectrum high schools; and ArtWorks out in public at Market Square, the Moss Street Paint-In, and on a piano the whole city can play. The Garth Homer Society is growing as a community destination. As we have said in the past, our first fifty years has been focused on getting Garth Homer out into the community – the next fifty years are focusing on bringing the community into Garth Homer.

In the past fiscal year, the Centre for Belonging remained our greatest challenge and our greatest opportunity. BC Housing's cancellation of the Community Housing Fund changed our financial modelling; but it has not changed our vision. This past year we made a strong step forward by establishing and building our new Fundraising and Development department, lead by Chief Advancement Officer Yvette Guigueno, to support both our annual fundraising and capital development fundraising efforts. We have continued to develop our government relations, engaging all three levels of government to build a path forward with federal, provincial, and municipal support. These relations were highlighted by the onsite visit and tour of Garth Homer by the Honourable Wendy Cocchia, Lieutenant Governor of BC, who has since become an Honourary Patron of the Society.

Thank you to our dedicated Board of Directors who have provided steady support for the Society through some turbulent experiences. Thank you to the management and staff for their ongoing dedication to support the people we serve to live their best lives. Thank you to our donors and funders who recognize an investment in Garth Homer is an investment in a better Victoria, British Columbia, and Canada. And most of all thank you to the families and clients of the Society - you are the reason we are all here.



Geoffrey Ewert
CEO



Chris Lovelace
Board Chair

Key Milestones

April 2025

Creation of a Development Department

The scoutting of Chief Advancement Officer, Yvette Guigueno, started the formation of the development department, created to meet the organizations growing fundraising needs.

June 2025

All-Abilities Hockey Tournament

The first All-Abilities Hockey Tournament was a huge success, drawing teams from across the island and lower mainland.

July 2025

Community Housing Fund Application

An application was submitted to the Community Housing Fund at the urging of BC Housing and the BC government, to fund the housing portion of the Centre for Belonging, a project previously promised to be fully government funded.

October 2025

Move to SJ Willis

All six of the Darwin-based Community Inclusion programs relocated to the SJ Willis School building, with clients being supported through the transition.

February 2026

Visit from The Honourable Leuitenant Governor

Their Honours, the Honourable Wendy Cocchia Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia and Mr. Sergio Cocchia visited Garth Homer programs at SJ Willis, meeting clients and learning about the Centre for Belonging. Later, Her Honour awarded GHS with her Honorary Patronage.

February 2026

Community Housing Fund Cancelled

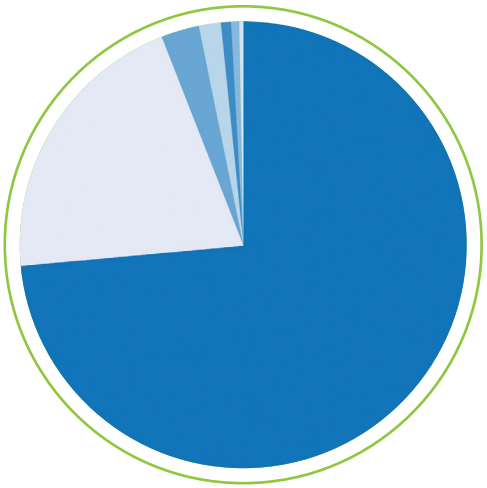
Provincial budget cuts saw the Community Housing Fund cancelled, and our application dismissed, leaving government contributions to the Centre for Belonging up in the air.

Finance

The Garth Homer Society (GHS) is a charitable non-profit that has seen continued growth over the past several years. Currently with an operating budget of approximately $12M, GHS has grown over 68% over the past five years. Our government funding through Community Living BC accounts for 75% of our revenue, while the remaining 25% is made up primarily through fundraising. Much gratitude and appreciation goes to the Garth Homer Foundation who provide a substantial portion of that 25%. Despite the increases in operating revenue, GHS continues to operate as a very lean organization with nearly 80% of all expenses going to direct client engagement through staff, program space, and program resources – and this is 5% above the total funding received from Community Living BC.

Revenue

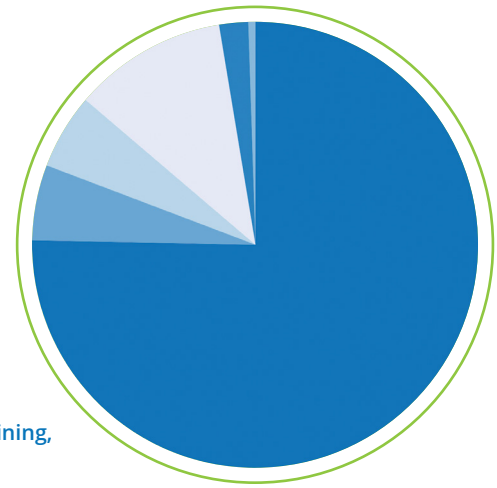
$12,154,336



- Provincial Grants $8,940,935
- Garth Homer Foundation $2,490,732
- Donations $334,545
- Fee for Services & Other Revenue $191,845
- Facility Rental $89,130
- Other Grants $70,000
- Amortization of Deferred Contributions $37,149

Expenses

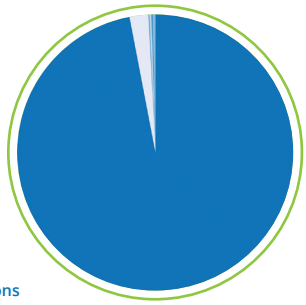
$ 12,510,014



- Salaries, Wages, & Benefits $9,481,160
- Office & General $687,179
- Service Delivery $609,095
- Facility Costs $1,402,817
- Amortization $264,782
- Staff Services, Training, & Development $64,981

2024/25 Comparison

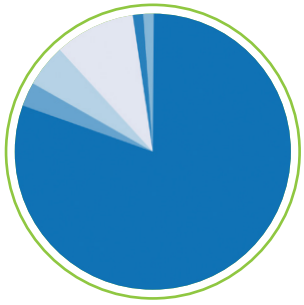
$11,029,733



- Provincial Grants $8,414,796
- Garth Homer Foundation $1,880,790
- Donations $115,761
- Fee for Services & Other Revenue $203,932
- Facility Rental $115,382
- Other Grants $295,403
- Amortization of Deferred Contributions $3,669

2024/25 Comparison

$10,333,661



- Salaries, Wages, & Benefits $8,297,773
- Office & General $289,957
- Service Delivery $515,580
- Facility Costs $976,596
- Amortization $126,932
- Staff Services, Training, & Development $126,863

A Full Life

For Gemma, working at Foxgloves Flowers is more than just a job—it's something she genuinely loves. As a Studio Assistant, she enjoys creating beautiful bouquets and being part of a supportive team. "I love doing the bouquets. Foxgloves Flowers are a great staff to work with," she says. After more than a year in the role, Gemma has grown in confidence, skills, and independence. Her journey doesn't stop at work, either. She also volunteers at Canadian Blood Services, giving her time to help others. Through employment and volunteering, Gemma continues to make a positive difference in her community.

> "I love doing the bouquets. Foxgloves Flowers are a great staff to work with."



Advancement

Laying the Groundwork

This year marked the launch of Garth Homer Society's first dedicated Advancement department. For the first time, fundraising, communications, marketing, stewardship, grants, and community engagement are coordinated through one team. This allows program staff to focus on supporting people while the Advancement team builds community support, shares our story, and develops the resources needed to support innovation, individualized services, and the future Centre for Belonging.

Building the Team

This year we welcomed Chief Advancement Officer Yvette Guigueno, Development Officer Steve Barker, Digital Specialist Mackenzie Lawrence, M1 Agency, communications advisor Jean MacGregor, and capital campaign advisor Tillie Schuster. Together, they bring the experience needed to strengthen fundraising, communications, marketing, and community engagement across Garth Homer Society.

Growing Community Support

Working with M1 Agency, we launched a community awareness campaign centered on belonging, expanded our newsletter to share more stories from across the organization, and strengthened our digital communications.

Strengthening Stewardship

We implemented a new donor management system, introduced personal acknowledgements for every donation, expanded our grant program, and established a volunteer Capital Campaign Committee. Through tours, presentations, and conversations, we also spent time listening and learning from our supporters and community partners.

Looking Ahead

Our theme this year was Laying the Groundwork, and that is exactly what was accomplished. We look forward to building on these foundations as we continue to strengthen Garth Homer Society, support innovation, respond to the individual needs of the people we support, and bring the Centre for Belonging to life.



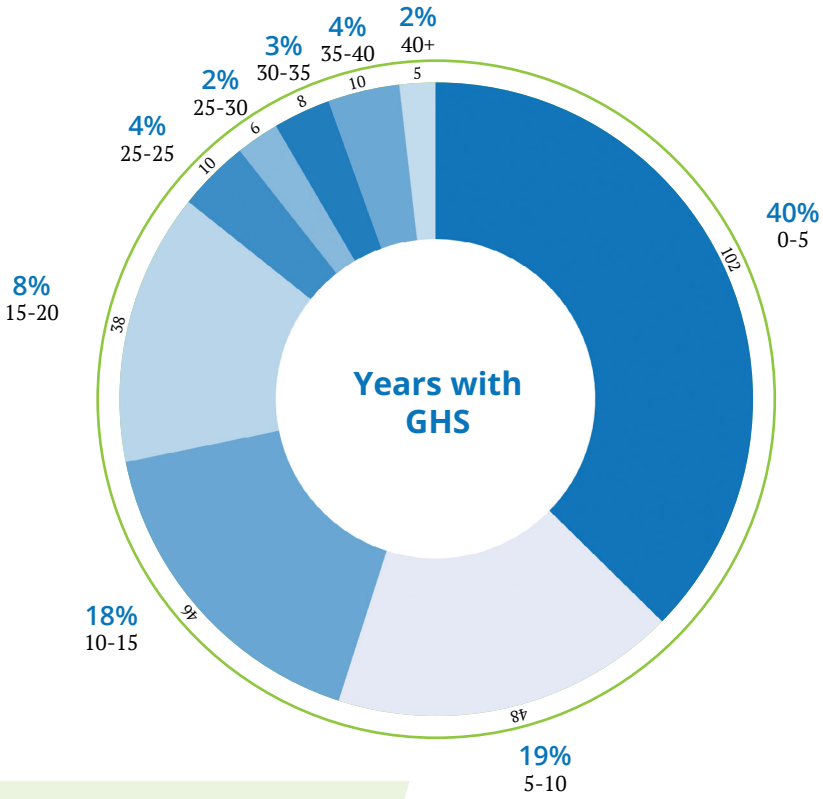


Publication Features

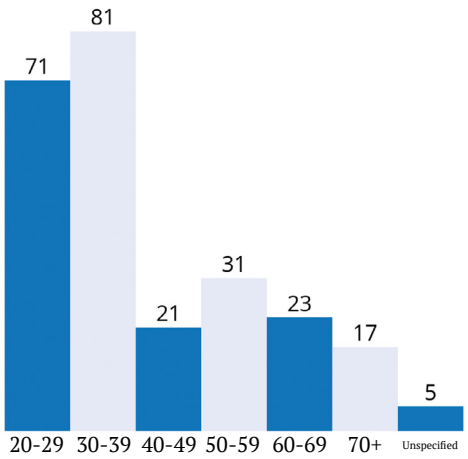
- Times Colonist
- Saanich News
- Victoria News
- Chek News
- CBC Live with Gregor Craigie
- Peninsula News
- CFAX 1070
- Western Investor

Client Demographics

249
Clients



Average Age



Employment

52
Clients employed

38
Employment partners

62%
Making over minimum wage

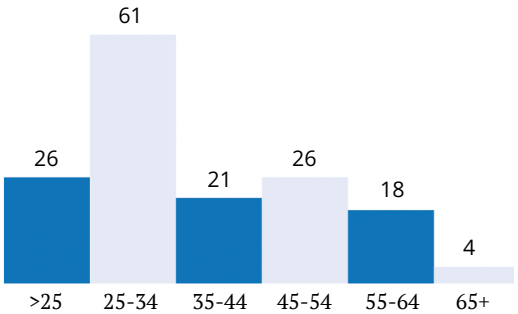
Volunteering

338
Average volunteer hours weekly

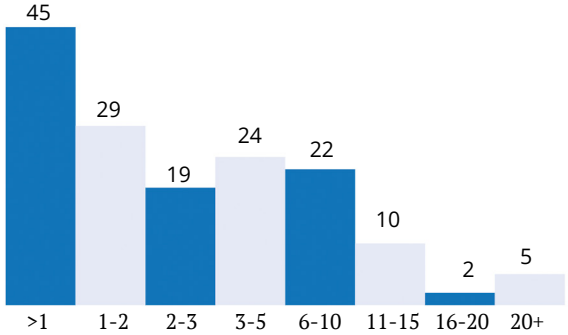
50
Volunteer placements

Staff Demographics

Average Age



Tenure (Years)



156
Total employees

25%
Employed over 5 years

45
People hired this year

4
Average years employed

72
Full-time employees

84
Part-time employees

Building Belonging | Service Delivery

ArtWorks



One of Artworks' proudest moments this past year was joining the Arts Alive Piano Painting Project. Chosen as a contributing studio, the artists spent weeks creating a piece inspired by Art Nouveau aesthetics, each designing their own section, then working together to bring them into one cohesive whole. The collaboration challenged and inspired everyone involved, culminating in a special opening celebration in Oak Bay, complete with live piano music, where the artists saw their work unveiled publicly. It was also a milestone year for artist Sarah K, whose beautiful body of work earned a solo show at a local library, a first for this artist and a proud moment for the whole studio.

Community Access Team



This past year, the Community Access Team (CAT) had the privilege of volunteering at the Victoria Native Friendship Centre's soup lunch, serving desserts, helping with post-lunch clean up, and building relationships with other volunteers and community members. Alex recently joined this placement after expressing an interest in finding more opportunities to gain experience and build skills for his resume. Throughout this experience, he has focused on developing his time management, interpersonal skills, cultural awareness, and teamwork, along with improving his personal care, all of which he takes great pride in.

COSMOS



COSMOS welcomed a new addition this year, Soo Bin from MOZART. The two programs worked together to ensure a smooth transition through ongoing support and communication. COSMOS also focused on building interconnection within the team and with other GHS programs, through group programming and by planning collaborative community outings.

Discovery



Discovery focuses on building meaningful connections, both with peers and the wider community. Clients do this by volunteering with local organizations, such as the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority, Swan Lake's Biodiversity Adopt-a-Patch program, and Soap for Hope. The team welcomed two new clients this year and made the year memorable with outings such as one with Able Sail Victoria. It was a year of growth, friendships, and new experiences.

Dreams



Spending time in community and building friendships across other GHS programs is important to DREAMS clients. A highlight from the year was going to Ribfest with their friend Scott from MOZART, enjoying good company, good food, good music, and good community connections.

Employment Services



This year has been busy for Employment Services, with more than 15 new referrals from CLBC. FIVE Behaviour and Education Consulting, a long-time employment partner, created two new positions for clients, and Island West Food Distributors added two more customized roles. Staff also kept up to date on the job market through WorkBC's Accessible Employment Expo.

Heron House



It has been a year of development, growth, and integration at Heron House. Solidifying its unique housing model while increasing capacity with three new residents brought many learnings and successes. Providing housing stability, expanded autonomy, connection, and belonging has been the team's greatest achievement this year. As Selena Bewsky, Manager of Residential Services put it "When the residents organically gather in the common areas and share time together, the magic happens and it's the best reward!" With the introduction of in-house programs, community inclusion, and cultural reconnection, Heron House is making an impact, with life-changing outcomes for residents and greater diverse communities alike.

LifeStreams



LifeStreams created opportunities for clients to build skills, confidence, independence, and meaningful community connections. Out & About offered six outings and built five community partnerships, helping clients strengthen collaboration, problem-solving, adaptability, and social skills. The Interactive Board Game Café grew from three members to 13, a space where social connection, teamwork, and confidence all developed together. LifeStreams also provided individualized computer, literacy, job readiness, and life skills support. Partnerships with organizations including CNIB, Friends of Music Society, and Saanich Municipality, along with external learning opportunities, expanded access to community resources.

Mozart



This year, MOZART successfully transitioned Soo Bin into her permanent program, COSMOS, creating space for the team to welcome new participant William. Each transition moves at the participant's own pace and readiness, though the process follows the same blueprint: collaborating with caregivers to ensure the best fit, visits to the new program space for familiarity, joining shared programs, and continued connection with the MOZART program and staff. Once transitioned, it's important for clients to feel they still have a second home in MOZART. Past team members become role models, guiding their peers through the same process. Full circle.

Options



The Options Podcast set up a new podcast room, giving hosts Tawnya, Taylor, and Nicholas space to build their confidence, communication, teamwork, and interview skills. Together, they produced 16 episodes on topics including volunteering, self-care, healthy choices, inclusion, and personal goals. They also conducted three interviews: one celebrating 140 years of Heron House, one with Michael Moore, a Living Consultant with the City of Victoria, about his journey to employment, and one with George and Vinny from Volunteer Victoria for the first video podcast. The podcast continues to give the hosts a chance to share their voices, connect with community, and show what people with developmental disabilities can achieve.

Pathways



Pathways honoured three clients who passed away this year, Alvin, Dolores, and Jim, and supported others through the loss of friends who were near and dear to them. All three had been part of the Garth Homer family for many years, two of them for more than 30, and had come to Pathways from other programs when they "retired." They will be missed. As GHS's program for aging clients, Pathways holds room for grief and for joy, and this year also enjoyed its share of celebrations. The Christmas party featured a magician for the eighth year running, and at Halloween the staff had as much fun as anyone trying to catch a donut.

STARR

STARR continued to build relationships with community partners through volunteer work. Angeline, Neil, and Tessa volunteered their time cleaning and gardening at Quadra Village Community Centre; Vivian baked treats to provide comfort to those accessing services at transition houses throughout the region; Christy volunteered at Island Sexual Health Society, building sexual health care packages for community members. These placements continue to give clients the chance to build skills and make valued contributions to the communities they live in.



Behind the Scenes Support | Department Updates

Finance & Administration

This was a year of significant transition for the Finance and Administration team. Nyla, Krista, Max, and Karman worked hard to maintain day-to-day operations while building new processes to support the organization's changing systems and locations. They made considerable progress preparing for the modernization of GHS finances, with a new cloud-based accounting and payment platform which has since launched. Alongside this, they supported the move from Darwin to SJ Willis, developing administrative procedures for the new location and relocating the management team from Tennyson to the Pyramid Building. Together, this work leaves GHS with stronger, more efficient administrative and financial foundations for the future.



Facilities

The Facilities team played an integral role in two moves this year, the first being the move from the Darwin site to the new SJ Willis property. Months of planning and preparation ensured each program space met the environmental and accessibility needs of the people transitioning there, with upgrades to HVAC, partition walls, washrooms, painting, and lighting. The second move established a new dedicated administrative office. Beyond these major projects, Facilities maintains high health and safety standards across GHS sites and keeps fleet vehicles well maintained to support uninterrupted services. Their dedication helps ensure safe, accessible, and welcoming spaces for everyone.



Human Resources

This year, Human Resources focused on strengthening and streamlining key processes to support staff and managers. The team hired and on-boarded 45 new employees across the organization, and made improvements to the progressive discipline process, First Aid renewal scheduling, and learning and development through the Garth Homer Learning Hub. While much of this work takes place behind the scenes, it helps ensure employees have the training, resources, and support they need to succeed in their roles.



Programme Innovation

Programme Innovation focused on addressing service gaps, building inclusive community partnerships, and creating new opportunities for learning and growth. A key achievement was the implementation of the Learning Hub, a learning management system that strengthens staff training while creating opportunities for individualized participant and community learning. Partnerships played an important role as well. Working with REACH, the team supported barrier-free arts initiatives; collaboration with the City of Victoria's EDI lead helped advance the Greater Victoria Accessibility Network; and work with Future Forge expanded job readiness support for secondary school students with disabilities.





Looking Forward | The Centre for Belonging

The 2025-2026 period has been marked by significant progress, resilience, and strategic repositioning in the development of the Garth Homer Centre for Belonging. Despite major changes to provincial government funding programs and the increasing uncertainty that created for GHS and the Nigel Valley as a whole, we are pleased to report the project has continued to advance toward realization. Throughout this period, t**he Society remained focused on its vision of creating an inclusive, mixed-use community hub that integrates housing, community services, social purpose commercial space, and programs for people with developmental disabilities.**

Significant resources were invested in the July 2025 application to the Community Housing Fund with BC Housing, reflecting several years of planning and design work. At the time, the submission of this application was considered a milestone achievement towards our development. Unfortunately, we received news that due to financial constraints, no applications for the fund would be reviewed.

Fortunately, the Society was proactive and had contingency plans in place should the expectations of BC Housing not be realized. Of the options identified, the Society prioritized those maintaining the current vision of the project to the greatest extent possible. Throughout 2026, considerable effort has been directed toward rebuilding the project's capital stack. Working with CitySpaces Consulting, the Society is pursuing a combination of federal funding through Build Canada Homes and the Build Communities Strong Fund, BC Builds financing, capital fundraising, and long-term debt financing. Our current capital stack demonstrates a viable pathway forward, promoting ongoing discussions with government partners and other interested parties.

The project has been approved for its development permit and work has commenced on the building permit and construction documentation phase. CitySpaces, Cascadia Architects, engineering consultants, and other project partners were mobilized to advance detailed design, with a target of submitting the building permit application by February 2027 and commencing construction as early as summer 2027.

At present, the Centre for Belonging remains a viable goal, a success in and of itself, as it is the most ambitious community-building initiative in the organization's history. The project has emerged from a period of uncertainty with renewed momentum, an approved development permit, active funding applications, growing public support, and a clear path toward construction. The vision of a truly inclusive community hub is closer to reality than ever, and at the heart of this tenacity and resilience have been the families of the Garth Homer Society. From gathering on a Saturday morning or over Zoom to discuss updates, challenges, and strategies, to providing letters of support and engaging local elected officials to take action, to activating their own community networks to rally support for this critical project – **the GHS families have made it clear that this project is going to happen.**

Looking Back | Organizational Growth

2015		2026
Clients 187	+33.2% →	Clients 249
Staff 113	+48.7% →	Staff 168
Operating $3.4M	+256% →	Operating $12.1M

Thank You to our Donors

Rick Anderson, in memory of Keith Homer
Steve Barker
Alan Brodie *
Michael & Christine Bloomfield
George Born
Denise Boudreau
Klaas Bouwman
Linda & Grant Brilz
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** Through the Garth Homer Foundation*

A Life and A Home at Heron House

For Lisa Newell, Heron House is more than a place to live—it's a place where she is building confidence and independence. After 10 years with Garth Homer Society, Lisa has found a home where she can make choices and enjoy life on her own terms.

"I love all the things I can do as part of independent living," Lisa says. She enjoys shopping, going for coffee, window shopping, and meeting friends independently. She also loves the vibrant neighbourhood and everything it has to offer.

Feeling safe and supported is important to Lisa. When asked about the staff at Heron House, she describes them as "Very helpful and trustworthy. They keep me safe."

Heron House is helping Lisa develop everyday skills, from grocery shopping to managing money, while giving her the freedom to live independently.



Thank you for supporting belonging.

Garth Homer
SOCIETY

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