**History of the Kootenay Regional Association for Community Living**

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| http://www.ksclbog.com/Images/bullet1.gif | In 1951 Dr. William James Endicott, Trail, BC, made steps to set up a nonprofit organization called Kootenay Society for Handicapped Children. Dr. Endicott believed that children diagnosed with "mental retardation" had the potential to learn given proper supports. He believed these children could learn life skills necessary to live outside of the institutions from their families and communities. The dream was to keep children home in the Kootenays and offer them the opportunity to develop to their fullest potential.  The first day-school for children was set up in a home in Trail under the sponsorship of Kootenay Society for Handicapped Children. Over the next five years, there were chapters established in Nelson, Kimberley, Creston, Cranbrook and Castlegar. Each chapter was an independent entity and had its own locally elected Board. Representatives of each Board joined together and made up the Board of Governors for the East and West Kootenay region.  In 1955, the BC Association for the Mentally Retarded was formed. This association represented local and regional associations in the making of policy and legislation in all matters concerning the developmentally disabled at a provincial level.  Dr. Endicott moved ahead with plans to open a custodial home and residential school which would house and educate children with developmental disabilities in the East and West Kootenays. In 1961, the Society bought a 35-acre parcel of land at Alice Landing, north of Creston. In 1962, the Board of Governors bought the Archibald Estate and sold the Alice Springs property.  In 1965, through cooperative funding efforts of the six KSHC associations and the provincial government, construction of a dormitory was completed, able to house 30 children.  In 1970, an adult residence was opened, and a day program was established which supported its residents in life skills. Vocational training began in 1972. People were gaining part-time work in Creston and participating in community functions.  In 1975, KSHC changed its name to Kootenay Society for the Handicapped, s it now provided services to adults as well as children.  In the late sixties, the concept of 'Normalization' was taking hold. Governing officials and staff of the Dr. Endicott Home and School strived to support this theory by supporting residents in participating in activities in a more conventional, natural environment.  In 1977, Dr. Endicott endorsed the change of name from the Dr. Endicott Home and School to the Endicott Centre.  In the 1980s the public school system, under great pressure from families of people with special needs and their advocates, began to take responsibility for the education of all children.  The 80's saw the beginning of the closure of the large institutions in BC, which housed and cared for people with developmental disabilities under the custodial model. It was the Board of Governors, along with the staff of The Endicott Centre, who lent their expertise to assist people in the return to their communities from Tranquille, an institute in Kamloops.  Gradually adult residents of the Endicott Centre moved to their own homes and apartments. A number of younger residents moved into foster families.  In 1989, Kootenay Society for the Handicapped changed its name to Kootenay Society for Community Living. The philosophy statement was revised in 1991 to read:  People with mental handicaps have a valued roll within society. The philosophy of equal rights and opportunities had been adopted in the development of programs and services.  The Board of Governors of Kootenay Society for Community Living continues to be a group of volunteers of individuals and local associations from Creston, Nelson, Castlegar, Trail, Fernie, Cranbrook and Kimberley.  KSCL Board of Governors offers information, collaboration on issues of common interest and advocacy for people with disabilities and their families. They also host an annual fall conference which brings people together for information sharing and socializing.  Each of the local boards offers a variety of services in their area, including training programs and assistance to people with disabilities.  KSCL Board of Governors offers the Crystal Henson Memorial Bursary and the Mary March Memorial Bursary to students who have lived in the Kootenays, offering financial support people who will graduate from post-secondary education leading to work with people with special needs.  ***Many thanks to Helen Maheu for her compilation of history of the "Kootenay Society for Community Living, Living the Dream", November 10, 1997***  In 2005, KSCL Board of Governors changed their name to Kootenay Regional Association for Community Living. |

**Summary of Core Values**

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| bullet | Respect and dignity of the person |
| bullet | Independence of choice |
| bullet | Support and guidance |
| bullet | Individualization |
| bullet | Individual empowerment |
| bullet | Improvement and maintenance of quality of life in all services. |