

FAST FACTS

About



Heaven Can Wait

Okanagan Quality Life Society

Our Mission

To provide persons with disabilities, seniors in care facilities, and members of seniors centres in the greater Vernon area the opportunity to enjoy therapeutic outings on beautiful Lake Okanagan.



About Our History

- In the early 1990s, Frank Wright, a volunteer in seniors' residences, borrowed a boat made out of old oil barrels, some fencing and a tarpaulin for shade, to take seniors for rides on the lake.
- Based on the seniors' enthusiastic response to these outings and their evident therapeutic value, Frank and his team of volunteers started the wheels in motion to obtain a dedicated boat to meet this need.
- In 1992 a Society was created for the purpose of providing a way for disabled members of the greater Vernon Community and seniors in long-term care facilities to enjoy therapeutic outings on beautiful Lake Okanagan.
- A fundraising campaign was launched, and soon a patio pontoon boat, christened *Heaven Can Wait*, was purchased, and the program was launched.
- Three decades later, the program is thriving, and the outings on Okanagan Lake continue to put delighted smiles on the faces of our clients.
- *30th Anniversary – We are celebrating our 30th Anniversary in 2023!*



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About the Boats

- Before the Society was formed, seniors were provided with occasional outings on the lake on a “boat” consisting of a platform mounted on empty oil drums, with fencing on the sides and a tarpaulin for shade.



- The Society's first true patio boat, a 24-foot Princecraft with two pontoons, a 50 hp motor and one bimini top, was purchased in 1992 with the proceeds of a fundraising campaign.



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- The boat was christened *Heaven Can Wait*, a most appropriate name submitted in a boat-naming contest by Rose Griffin, a 103-year-old care home resident of Bethany (Heritage Square).
- Moorage was donated by Seymour Marina (now Blue Heron Marina and Gas Bar). Then, in 1994 Vernon Yacht Club kindly donated moorage and has continued ever since.
- Blue Heron Marina and Gas Bar generously donates a portion of our fuel annually.
- Heaven Can Wait put smiles on the faces of her clients for 21 years before being decommissioned in 2014. During that time, she conducted an estimated 2,200 trips comprising some 19,000 passengers.
- At first she had only one bimini top, then two, and eventually one full one.



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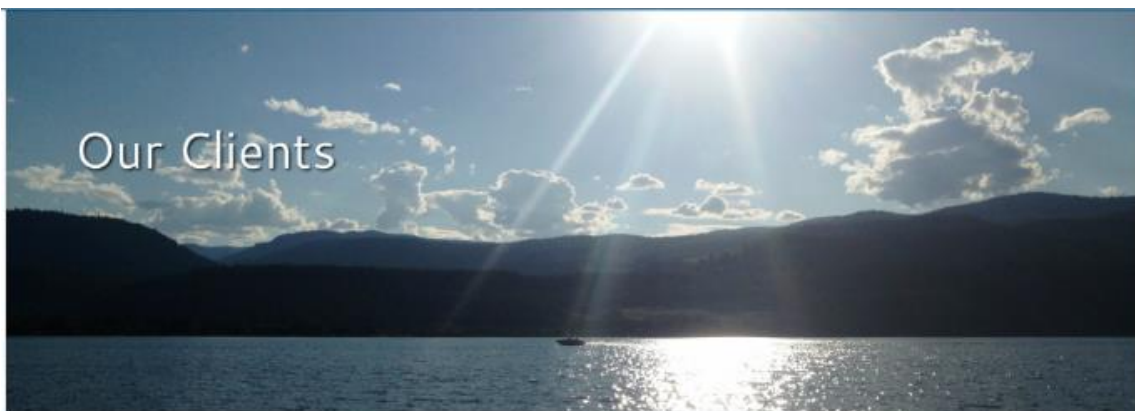
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- In 2013, a highly successful funding campaign began, and soon *Heaven Can Wait II* was purchased and put into service the following season.
- The new vessel is a 25.5 foot-long Avalon LS, with 3 pontoons, a 90 hp motor and extra-wide doors to accommodate wheelchairs.



About Our Clients

- We currently serve over 50 different client groups.
- In accordance with Transport Canada regulations, the number of passengers is limited to six clients and one to two crew/caregivers per trip.
- Clients pay a modest fee to help defray costs for insurance, fuel, maintenance, training and supplies.



- 24th Avenue Residential Facility
- Abbeyfield House (Armstrong)
- Abbeyfield House (Vernon)
- Andover Terrace
- Archway Society
- Canadian Mental Health (CMHA)
- Canterbury Court
- Cardinal House - 28th Ave Homes
- Carrington Place Retirement Residence
- CentrePoint House Venture Training
- Coldstream Meadows
- Connect Lake Country
- Connectability Okanagan
- Creekside Landing (Kaigo)
- Daily Activities Centre
- Downs Residence
- Gateby Care Facility
- Gateby Daybreak Program
- Good Samaritan Society
- Halina Centre
- The Hamlets
- Hearthstone Manor
- Heaton Place (Armstrong)
- Heritage Square (Kaigo)
- Heron Grove
- Kindale Community
- Kindale Residential
- Kingfisher Place - 28th Ave Homes
- Lake Country Lodge & Manor
- Monashee Mews
- Noric House
- Okanagan Chateau Retirement Res.
- Orchard City Abbeyfield - Kelowna
- Orchard Valley Retirement Residence
- Parkview Place (Enderby)
- Parkwood Regency Retirement Resort
- Piccadilly Terrace (Salmon Arm)
- Pioneer (Kaigo)
- Pleasant Valley Manor
- Polson Residential Care
- Polson Special Care
- Shuswap Association Community Living
- Silver Springs
- Stellars Jay - 28th Ave Homes
- Sunnee Noah's Arc Society
- Support to Young Parents
- Thompson Community Services
- Venture Training
- Vernon and District Association for Community Living (VDACL)
- Vernon Restholm
- Victorian Retirement Residence
- Western Human Resource Corp
- Whitevalley Community Resource Centre (Lumby)



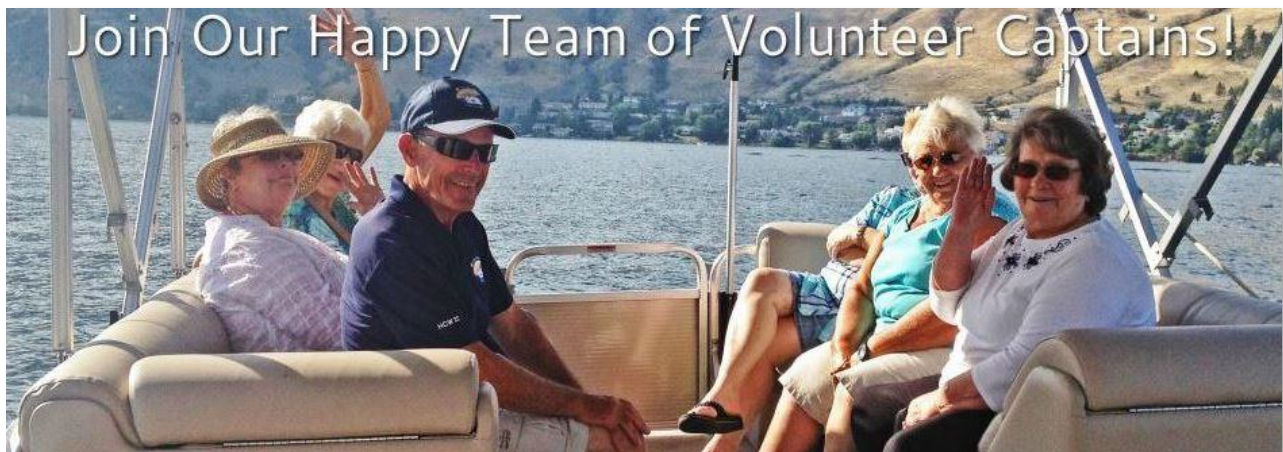
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About Our Captains

- Our captains - all volunteers - are men and women with varying nautical experience.
- Captains must possess the Transport Canada Pleasure Craft Operator Card.
- New captains are trained to handle the boat safely and are paired with seasoned captains to “learn the ropes”.
- There are always two captains on each trip. At least one must be certified to the Standard level First Aid with CPR and AED.
- Each captain is assigned to one of five teams. Each team is responsible for a specific weekday. Up to four trips may be scheduled each day.
- In 1992 we had 10 captains; today, we have between 45 and 50.
- We are always recruiting new captains!



About Our Society



- Created in 1992, the Society was originally titled the *Okanagan Quality Life for Residents in Care Society*.
- In 1993 the Society was officially renamed *Okanagan Quality Life Society*.
- The Society does not receive regular government funding. It relies upon charitable donations and volunteers from our local community to keep afloat. Our captains donate their time to complete as many trips as weather permits.
- The *Okanagan Quality Life Society* website may be found at – www.oqls.org.
- The Board of Directors comprises eight members. It meets a minimum of twice per year.
- The Annual General Meeting is held in early May.
- Membership is open to any interested person and subject to an annual fee of \$5.00.

About Our Operations

- From 1992 to 2010, *Heaven Can Wait* was registered as a Pleasure Craft and subject to the same government regulations as any privately owned vessel.
- In 2011, Transport Canada decided that the boat should be registered as a Non-Pleasure Craft.
- Operations were suspended for that year while it was determined how the more extensive regulations would impact on the boat's operations and could be satisfied.
- In 2012, *Heaven Can Wait* was back in operation as a Non-Pleasure Craft.
- Among the changes, the maximum number of passengers is eight (six clients and two crew/caregivers), and at least one captain per trip is certified in Standard First Aid with CPR & AED.
- Trips are conducted only on week days.
- Between 160 and 200 client trips are conducted per year.
- The boat does not sail in bad weather or when there is too much smoke in the air (client comfort and safety is paramount).
- In 2017, to avoid causing further erosion damage to the shoreline during serious flooding, *Heaven Can Wait II* boat trips were suspended until the second week in July.
- Each client group's COVID protocols are adhered to by our captains during every boat trip.

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About Our Supporters

We wish to thank the many individual donors and our generous and caring community for your help in achieving our goals. Your donations will keep giving year after year!

Coldstream Women's Institute



Vernon Yacht Club



Blue Heron Marina & Gas Bar



Alpine Centre Bookwarehouse



Alpine Centre Bookwarehouse

Army Navy & Air Force Veterans Spitfire Unit #5



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100 Women Who Care



100+ Women Who Care - Vernon

New Horizons for Seniors

Funded by the
Government of Canada's
New Horizons for Seniors Program

Canada

Rotary Club of Kalamalka



City of Vernon



Royal Canadian Legion



VantageOne Credit Union



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During our 2013 fundraising year, for the purchase of a replacement pontoon boat, these generous individuals donated \$1000 or more!



Okanagan Quality Life Society

wishes to express its

A P P R E C I A T I O N

*to those who so generously donated
\$1000 or more for*

Heaven Can Wait II

*Ladies Auxiliary #3557
Fraternal Order of Eagles
Enderby & District Lions Club
Mid-Kam Installations Ltd.
Twin Anchors Houseboats
Rob & Maureen Irwin
Royal Lepage Vernon
Kelly Otto & Family
Jane & Henry Swan
Tolko Industries Ltd.*

*Vernon & District Association
for Community Living
Estate of Hazel Gumbrell
Ron, Val & Greg Heuman
Colleen & Corrie van Dyk
Bruce & Marcia Beley
Gateby Care Centre
Polson Residential
Noric House*