



COMMUNITY REPORT



Services

Serving between 600 to 800 people daily, the Drop-In Centre is a sanctuary and community gathering place. During 2017/2018, we served over 935,000 meals and snacks through the Nutrition Bar and Dining Room.

Programs

With over 60 programs, Our Place partners with community groups and volunteers to provide a vast array of opportunities to enrich intellect, develop personal insight, unleash creativity and learn practical skills.

Housing & Shelter

With a shortage of affordable housing, Our Place saw the need to continue operating shelter space. My Place housed 40 individuals while 60 individuals accessed nightly shelter in the First Metropolitan gymnasium.

WELCOME

Our Place Society



MESSAGE

Executive Director
and Board Chair

OUR PLACE — WE'RE MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our Place has always been a sanctuary for people who are experiencing some of the toughest times of their lives. We provide shelter from the elements, nourishment for the body and soul, showers and health care programs, and a non-judgmental ear to help begin the healing and find the supports people need. Unfortunately, there are times when even this just doesn't seem enough.

When we see a need in the community we feel a responsibility to act, even if it can be controversial at times. And thanks to the incredible support of our donors, we are able to respond with speed and efficiency.

When the opioid crisis erupted with a spike in deaths throughout our community, we quickly brought in a shipping container to serve as a temporary overdose prevention site. During the year, our staff responded to 343 drug overdoses without a single fatality. With the opening of a supervised consumption site next door to Our Place, we're pleased to report that we have handed this responsibility over to Island Health. Now we have turned our attention to healing and rehabilitation through a therapeutic recovery community. (See Page 12)

While overdose prevention took a lot of focus, we didn't take our eyes off the lack of affordable housing that has forced so many people to live outside. Finding space to house people has been a challenge, but it's not one that we shirk from. In the last year, we accommodated 60 people per night in our First Metropolitan night shelter and set up 48 individuals in the re-opened My Place 24/7 transitional shelter. Best of all, however, we transitioned over 100 people into permanent housing. (See Page 8)

As the old saying goes about teaching a man to fish, we also identified a need for people in their struggle to return to work. Our family members come from all walks of life. Some battle with addiction, others have suffered from work injuries, lack of education, a lifetime of abuse that has eroded self-esteem, and more. With your support and generosity, we opened a unique employment program designed specifically for those who didn't have anywhere else to turn or felt frustrated with traditional programs. (See Page 7)

Finally, we have created an Our Place Foundation for asset protection, to provide income for Our Place operations, and to fundraise for future capital projects. This will ensure that Our Place has the needed funds for long-term sustainability. As the stewards of your generosity, we continually strive to make sure your dollars go as far as possible to help those who need us most.

With much gratitude,

Don Evans
Executive Director

Diana Butler
Board Chair



FAMILY

Hope and Belonging



VISION AND MISSION

VISION

Nourishment, hope and belonging
for all in Greater Victoria.

MISSION

We offer our most vulnerable citizens
a place to call their own, where we
live, share and grow together.

PROGRAMS

and SERVICES

Your invaluable donations have helped us provide

60+

Programs & Services

PROGRAMS

Education:

Our Place partners with community groups and volunteers to provide a vast array of opportunities to enrich intellect, develop personal insight, unleash creativity and learn practical skills.

Volunteers provide programs such as: Art Group, Art Therapy, Library, Choir, Computer Training, Gardening, Story Collective, Job Skills, Literacy, Knitting, Financial Planning, Math & English Class, Bike Maintenance, and more.

Health:

Our Place believes in bringing as many services as we can directly to the people we serve. To that end, our Medical Room invites nurses, doctors and paramedics directly into the Drop-In Centre. Other health services provided by volunteers includes: Acupuncture, Acupressure, Chiropractic, Craniosacral Therapy, Massage, Therapy Dog, Dental Hygiene, First Aid, Foot Care, Hearing Clinics, Eye Care, Mental Health and Addiction Counselling, Reiki, Reflexology, Vets for Pets, and much more.

440,429
meals served
+
494,958
snacks served

SERVICES

Drop-In Centre:

Serving between 600 to 800 people per day, the Drop-In Centre is a sanctuary and community gathering place.

Our Nutrition Bar, staffed by friendly volunteers, is open between our scheduled hot meals, and serves coffee, tea and snacks. Our Message & Mail Centre allows more than 400 people with no fixed address to receive mail and phone messages. Other services include access to computers, clothing, games, library, and more.

Outreach:

Our Place Outreach Workers meet people where they are at, building trust with a vulnerable population that has often felt at odds with mainstream society. The team provides Advocacy, Financial Crisis Support, Field Trips, Hope Fund, Interventions, Sports, Hair Cuts, Showers, Access Pro Bono Legal Services, Overdose Prevention Site, Income Tax, Counselling, Aboriginal Housing Advocacy, Referrals to Employment, Housing, Government Agencies, Medical, Detox & Treatment Services.

Meals:

We serve over 1,200 nutritious meals and 1,350 snacks daily. In 2017/2018, we served over 935,000 meals and snacks through the Nutrition Bar and Dining Room.

36

People have gone through the first stages of the Next Steps employment program



NEXT STEPS TO EMPLOYMENT

Joining the workforce after a long absence can be a struggle at best, but when you also suffer from multiple barriers such as homelessness, brain injury or learning disability, the hurdles can seem unsurmountable.

A new Our Place program called Next Steps to Employment wants to change that.

Next Steps Program Manager Jeremy Ball has recently begun the third intake of participants. The program lasts for 12 weeks and is aimed at helping people break through multiple barriers to get back into work.

Next Steps is a unique program in that it meets participants where they are at and shapes itself around the five senses to find the best path to learning.

Because people learn in different ways, the program is designed to make sure it doesn't remind participants of a place where they didn't feel welcome, or where they weren't successful.

This nurturing environment is aimed at rekindling the hope of working again.

Some of the participants haven't worked in 10 years, while others have never held what would be considered a real job.



One 50-year-old participant recently went for his first ever job interview thanks to the support and encouragement of the program's job coach.

Often, the first step is basic life skills. If, for example, someone didn't grow up with a parent who made them get up each morning, brush their teeth and go to school, their concept of the

importance of being on time would be different.

When people complete the program, they aren't abandoned. The job coach is there to support both the new employee and the employer to make sure that any challenges are dealt with in a way that is positive for everyone.

The coaches want to create an environment where companies are excited about hiring Next Steps participants.

HOUSING

and SHELTER

109
people were
transitioned
into
permanent
homes

HOUSING

The bustle of conversation and meals on the first two floors of our building on Pandora usually steals the attention of volunteers and visitors. But the top three floors house 45 units of quiet sanctuary for those who are pulling their lives back together.

These 45 private rooms are designed and fully equipped to help each resident feel at home in a supportive and caring environment. Two of these units are dedicated to short term housing for people who are waiting for a spot in a detox or treatment program. The other 43 rooms are for those who are committed to moving toward independent living.

Each resident works in consultation with an Our Place Society support worker and a mental health and addictions clinician. Together they develop a plan to overcome the disabilities and challenges that stand between the resident and his or her dream of living a full, rich and independent life.

SHELTER

In response to the increasing homelessness crisis, Our Place continued to operate an overnight shelter in the gymnasium at First Metropolitan United Church; a 24/7 transitional home called My Place in the former Boys & Girls Club; and Choices, a 24/7 transitional home in the former Youth Custody Centre in View Royal.

When the Choices shelter program closed in early 2018, all the residents were successfully housed within the community.



‘ After 30 years together, we were living apart, and not by choice. ’



Greg & Tracy's Story

When you've been married for 32 years, the idea of living apart seems unfathomable. And when those decades have been as turbulent as Greg and Tracy's life has been, your partner becomes your rock, your only anchor in the storm.

Greg and Tracy met when they were both in their early 20s. They were both "hard partiers" with a dark undertone that would shape their lives ahead.

Greg was coming out of a divorce, while Tracy's journey had seen her fresh out of hospital, the victim of an abusive boyfriend, sex work, and a cloak of depression that nearly ended her life.

"I don't know what the hell happened," she admits. "But I had a bullet lodged in my skull. They (hospital staff) told me it was a suicide attempt."

Tracy was 23 and a single mother at the time. Her son, Danny, was living with his grandparents, and that's where he stayed.

Shortly after meeting at a local Victoria bar, Greg and Tracy moved in together and then quickly tied the knot. Their common ground, however, was alcohol, which soon escalated into heroin.

"It was the drug I was looking for all

my life," says Greg as he describes the euphoria and escape he felt when using.

When Tracy got pregnant with her second son, Michael, their lifestyle didn't change. When Michael was 18 months old, family services took him away. After some struggle, they managed to get their son returned, but lost him again when their addiction fought back.

After the second loss, Greg and Tracy entered the methadone program. When they were both stable, Michael was returned to them. And 30 years later, they are both still on the program.

Sadly, Michael passed away from an overdose in 2016 at the age of 28.

"He kept his heroin use a secret from us," says Greg, the pain still evident in his eyes. "He only told us about it a couple of months before he died."

To make matters worse, Greg and Tracy were living apart at the time of their son's death. Not through choice, but circumstance.

They had both been sleeping on mats in a gymnasium at First Met United Church on a night shelter program being run by

Our Place, when health problems meant Greg had to be on oxygen.

He was given a room at Salvation Army in order to have an oxygen tank, while Tracy remained on the nightly mats.

Fortunately, they could spend their days together at Our Place where they would meet up for breakfast and supper. In the afternoons, they would both sleep wherever they could find a space.

Our Place managed to move them both into its fifth floor housing where they had rooms directly across the hall from each other.

Greg grins as he says Tracy comes and knocks on his door every morning so they can spend the day together.

With the help of the Our Place housing support team, the next step, they both say, is to move into a one-bedroom apartment where they can be together always.

CRISIS

Fentanyl & Overdoses
— Our Place responds

SAVING LIVES

When a crisis hits our community, Our Place doesn't turn its back— we can't. Everything that makes us a sanctuary of hope and belonging is also what propels us to roll up our sleeves and ask: "What can we do to help?"

When the opioid crisis first began taking lives, Our Place didn't sit on the sidelines and wait until an official response could be mustered. Instead, we opened a temporary overdose prevention site in our courtyard and began administering life-saving Naloxone, oxygen, harm reduction supplies and education.

Best of all, we listened. And when people were ready to change their lives, we were there to get them into detox or opioid agonist treatment.

It was heartbreaking work that took its toll on everyone involved, and we are thrilled that Island Health has now opened a sanctioned Supervised Injection Site. This has allowed us to close down our emergency overdose prevention site and reclaim that part of our courtyard.

Thank you for your patience, support and encouragement during this difficult period.

From April 2017 to April 2018
Our Place staff responded to
and treated:

343

drug overdoses
without a single fatality

71

people were referred to detox
and treatment



STAFF

& Volunteers



THERAPEUTIC RECOVERY

COMING IN 2018

OUR VISION

Our Place is in final preparations to open a Therapeutic Recovery Community, which will provide stable housing and treatment for people caught in the destructive cycle of homelessness, addiction and incarceration.

The Therapeutic Recovery Community offers a strengths-based community approach to recovery in which individuals have the opportunity to receive education regarding the disease of addiction and the supports to conquer the factors that are limiting their ability to achieve a full recovery.

The primary goal of a Therapeutic Recovery Community is to foster individual change and promote positive growth that helps an individual return to society and lead a productive life. By using a Community as Method approach, all residents have a responsibility to hold both themselves and others accountable, challenge criminal thinking, and learn how to embrace pro-social behaviours and relationships.

The intent of Our Place in establishing a Therapeutic Recovery Community is to provide critical recovery focused supported housing that compliments the Housing First Strategy in Greater Victoria. The program will address such barriers to recovery as trauma, brain injury, abuse, mental health, and criminality.

BC Housing has leased Our Place the former Victoria Youth Custody Centre in View Royal, provided a grant of approximately \$310,000 for site renovations, and is covering property tax costs for the next three years.

Alongside \$2 million being raised in private donations, the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions is providing \$4.7 million in partial funding over seven years.

In collaboration with aboriginal, government and community leaders, we have developed a comprehensive Therapeutic Recovery Community Program.





Davin's Story

A Victoria plumber who lost everything to drug addiction, including both his brothers to drug overdoses, knows why therapeutic recovery works.

Davin Holmes, 37, attended a similar program in Nanaimo that gave him the tools to change a life of self-destruction into self-development. "I got a message from my daughter last night and she told me that I was the best father a little girl could ever ask for and I have that back in my life thanks to places like this," said Holmes.

"When you pick people up you change the way they see the world and I believe the therapeutic community did that for me."

Holmes, physically fit and employed, is the antithesis of what he was when teenage drinking, smoking weed and ingesting drugs became addiction to opioids.

"That was what took me out, for sure," Holmes said. "That's where the physical dependence of the drug kind of took over my life."

Holmes moved from Percocet to Oxycodone to heroin. He started lying to his wife and spending a disproportionate amount of money on drugs. "I had no idea how severe the addiction could be,"

Holmes said. "There was a time there when they first hit the scene, doctors were writing prescriptions for everybody." Before long, he didn't recognize himself. "You think 'this isn't me' — I hate people who lie, cheat and steal," Holmes said. "Everything I hated in someone's character, I became."

"Opiates are hard to quit, they take over your life," said Holmes. "It doesn't matter what kind of person you are ... your brain will be re-wired and you will become addicted." His wife left with the couple's two young children, he said. He left his job and stole to feed his habit. "You're stuck in this dark hole and feel like everybody who cares about you is leaving and turning their back on you," said Holmes. "It's a vicious cycle and getting out of it is extremely challenging."

Holmes went to a treatment centre in 2012 and was sober for two-and-a-half years. He was making good money, working as a pipe-fitter. Then, in 2014, Holmes' younger brother, having just returned from working on a fishing boat, died after taking an Oxycodone laced with fentanyl while partying with friends.

After a memorial with family and friends, Holmes returned home and used heroin. "It was right away, instant," he said of his addiction. In a few months, he wasn't working again, was selling drugs, and

ended up in jail.

At the Nanaimo Correctional Centre, however, he volunteered for a therapeutic recovery program similar to the one being planned by Our Place. While there, his only remaining brother, 38, died of an overdose.

"Change is possible," said Holmes. "It just takes a lot of hard work and consistency."

Where treatment centres in the past failed, the therapeutic recovery method worked. It taught him to meditate, change his reaction to conflict, change what had become criminal thinking patterns, use peer support, and re-instilled in him a disciplined work ethic.

"It is going to give people a new chance at life." Holmes now has the relationship he wanted with his children, lifts weights every day, eats well, hikes and goes fishing with new friends.

"I want so much more out of life." He is a close friend with his former wife and is looking forward to helping others at the new therapeutic recovery community centre. "No one wants that lifestyle, no one in addiction wants that for themselves and sometimes they just need a little jump start, to know somebody cares."

- Cindy E. Harnett, Times Colonist

BY THE NUMBERS

A YEAR IN REVIEW

*Statistics include Our Place, Choices & My Place where available

Our Place provides a safe sanctuary every day of the year

39,007
volunteer
hours

15,292
hot showers
in Our Place
hygiene

440,429
meals served

494,958
snacks served

2470
one-on-one sessions
with outreach workers

1177
housing
referrals

1639
crisis
interventions
by trained staff

71
detox and
treatment
referrals

411
employment
referrals

218
legal
referrals

849
ministry
advocacy

405
foot baths

1018
medical
referrals

465
financial
support
grants

365
haircuts

* In June 2018, Our Place received additional funding to extend its summer hours until 9 p.m.

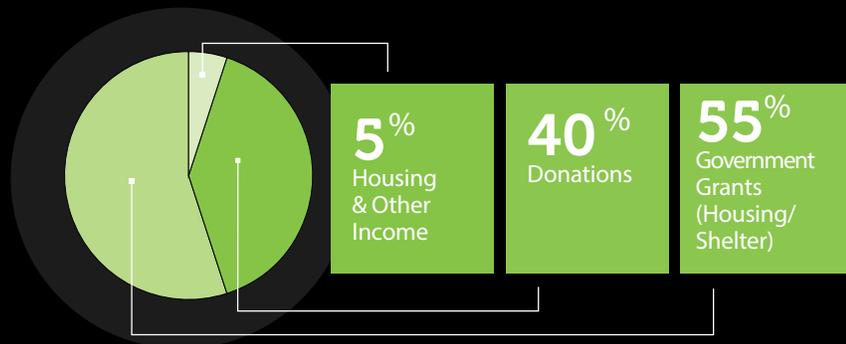
FINANCES

April 2017 - March 2018

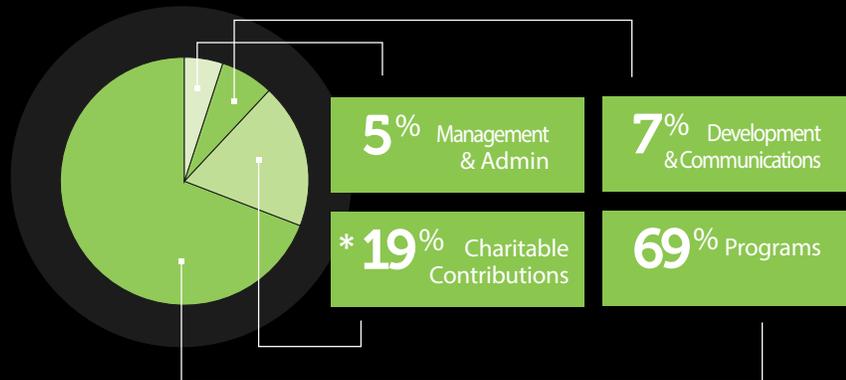
Thousands of caring supporters joined us in helping Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens.

Here's the breakdown of how we carefully used donor dollars to support our mission:

Revenue
\$10,179,793



Expenses
\$11,362,222



Operating Loss **

\$1,182,429

* During 2017-18 we established the Our Place Foundation with an initial Charitable Contribution from Our Place Society of \$2,170,511. The Foundation is an entity under the control of Our Place Society. Our audited financials for the year ended March 31, 2018 are located on our website: www.ourplacesociety.com

** The operating loss was primarily due to a donation of \$1,228,398 from operating and capital reserves. This amount was part of the \$2,170,000 initial Charitable Contribution to the Our Place Foundation.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Diana Butler, Chair
Ernie Quantz, Vice Chair
Andrea Jakeman-Brown, Treasurer
Brett Hayward, Secretary
Susan Haddon, Past Chair

DIRECTORS:

Susan Abells	Scott Daly
Karen Adams	Cairine Green
Lauree Austin	Linda Ryder
Neal Berger	Ansley Tucker
Bill Cantelon	

LEADERSHIP

Don Evans, Executive Director
Le-Ann Dolan, Director of Operations
Alf Eamer, Director of Finance
Grant McKenzie, Director of Communications
Suzanne Dubé, Director of Development
Debbie Berg, Director of Housing
Dana Young, Director of Therapeutic Community

OUR VALUES

Unconditional Love – We are an organization with Christian values and principles. We believe that everyone should experience unconditional love in a non-judgmental way.

Hope – We are founded on the belief that each individual who comes through our doors will find inspiration, support and comfort. We believe in the potential of all and provide opportunities for positive change. We advocate for social justice.

Teamwork – We value the contributions of our staff and volunteers, and ensure they are well trained and supported. We work together as one team committed to our mission, vision and values.

Belonging – We strive to create a nurturing atmosphere of home and family, where all are welcome and can experience a sense of hope and belonging. We are inclusive. Our doors are open to those of all cultures and beliefs.

Safety – We believe all who enter Our Place should feel secure and free from harassment or mistreatment of any kind. We endeavour to create a safe atmosphere where everyone can experience a sense of well-being.

OUR PLACE SOCIETY

919 Pandora Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3P4
Phone: 250-388-7112
Email: admin@ourplacesociety.com
Website: ourplacesociety.com

Registered Canadian Charity
82709 8344 RR0001

ADVISORY CABINET

Frank Bourree (C)	Ian Batey
Eric Charman	Trudi Brown
Keith Dagg	Greg Conner
Peter R. Jando	
Peter Schenk	



ourplace

Hope and Belonging