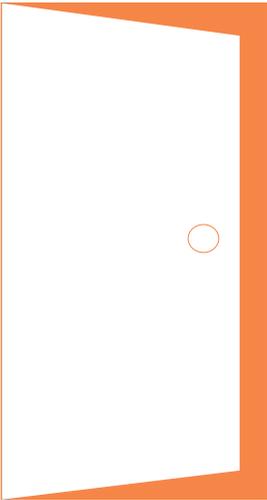
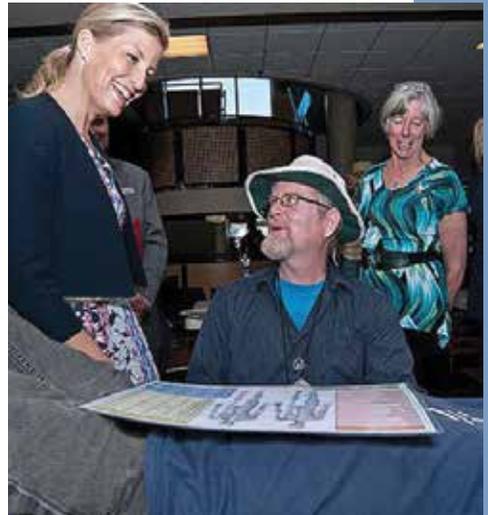


Our Place
Progress
Growth
Opportunity





Message from our Executive Director and Board Chair

What an incredibly exciting and busy year at Our Place. Our stellar team of staff, volunteers and supporters came together to increase our hours into the evening throughout the winter, plus tackle a significant increase in the number of meals served. With our kitchen delivering over 575,000 meals (up from 420,000 the year before), our commitment remains stronger than ever: to provide hope and belonging to Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens.

And while meals are an important component of that commitment, it isn't the only thing we do. This past year saw us increase the number of programs and services that we offer. New programs include everything from bike maintenance to bingo, alcoholics anonymous to reiki, and math classes to literacy. We believe that each of these programs offers a step toward success for people who may see little hope in their daily lives.

Our focus remains strong on education, health care, and employment skills, but we also know how important it is to heal the wounds of addiction and abuse, along with physical and mental health challenges.

To that end we introduced a recovery floor into our transitional housing program for residents working on addiction issues, created a medical room in our drop-in floor, brought in special counselling to deal with the multi-generational scars of the residential school system, hired Aboriginal Housing Support Workers, and placed more focus on mental health and addiction resources.

We also actively reached out to the community, meeting with family members, volunteers, staff and community leaders. We engaged and listened to what people had to say, incorporating their ideas and suggestions into our next strategic plan.

Thank you for your generosity. With your support, we can and will continue to transform lives.

With much gratitude,

Don Evans
Executive Director

Susan Haddon
Board Chair



Programs & Services

DROP-IN CENTRE

Coffee & Community, Computers, Clothing, Games, Library, Phone & Message Centre.

"People care here," says Mac, "and they don't judge." Dressed in layers of dirty clothing, Mac has pushed three plastic chairs together to form a single bed against the Memorial Wall in Our Place's community drop-in area. "I was sleeping in the park," he says, "but it wasn't safe. Got a lot of my stuff stolen, and I've been threatened too many times to count. I come here to get something to eat and grab some shut eye without worrying about somebody stabbing me in the back." He sighs. "It ain't perfect, but thank God it's here."

More than 400 people with no fixed address benefit from receiving mail and phone messages in the Phone & Message Centre.

"I use the computers every day," says Francis. "I like to go on Facebook and see what all my relations are doing. I can see new pictures of my nieces and nephews, and catch up on the news. It keeps me connected, you know?"

EDUCATION

Art Group, Library, Choir, Computer Training, Gardening, Story Collective, Job Skills, Literacy, Knitting, Financial Planning, Math Class, Bike Maintenance, Income Tax Preparation.

"I'm a graduate," Thomas says with a smile. "I took the math class that Camosun offered here, and the instructor was real patient with me."

"I like to read," says Emma, leaning on a cane in the computer lab where the library is located. "The library here really improved in the last year, and nobody gives you hassle about borrowing more than one book. I like mysteries, and there's always a good supply of new ones now. We get the newspaper, too, but I prefer a good book."

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



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



Our Vision Nourishment, hope and belonging for all in Greater Victoria.



MEALS

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Bagged Lunches, BBQs, Birthdays, Holiday Feasts, Nutrition Bar.

Our volunteers have seen a lot of changes over the years since Our Place first opened its doors in late 2007, but the most staggering change may be in the increased need for a hot meal among our region's most vulnerable.

In fact, the number of meals served jumped from 420,000 in 2013/14 to over 575,000 in 2014/15. The reasons behind this increase are as diverse as the population we serve, although we are definitely seeing more and more vulnerable people who simply have a harder time making ends meet.

This means a growing percentage of our neighbours — including seniors, plus the physically and mentally challenged — are being forced to choose between food and rent.

"I couldn't stay with him anymore," says Mandy. "Not since that last beating. With him gone, I don't have money for food after paying rent. I come to Our Place two or three times a week, just to get by." She offers a shy smile. "The cooks do a great job."

OUTREACH

Advocacy, Emergency Food, Financial Crisis Support, Field Trips, Hope Fund, Interventions, Sports, Referrals to Employment, Housing, Government Agencies, Legal, Medical, Detox and Treatment Services, Aboriginal Housing Advocacy.

"Roman and Sandy are like angels," says Donald, talking about two of our veteran Outreach Workers. "I don't know where I'd be if they weren't here to get me the help I needed."

"My doc's all the way across town," a family member says as he lines up in the morning for one of the prized bus tickets distributed daily by Our Place's Outreach team. "I ran out of medicine and he needs to see me before I can get a refill."

Outreach work is stressful and intense. To the same degree, it is also incredibly rewarding. Each Outreach worker at Our Place brings a diverse range of training and expertise to the team. Some have professional degrees, while others have walked in the same shoes as those they now help.

Family members develop trusting relationships at Our Place, inspiring them with the hope and confidence they need to succeed. Thousands of referrals are arranged by Outreach workers to ensure peoples' needs, arising from trauma, mental health, addictions, isolation and poverty, are addressed. As one family member relates: "The workers provide direction and open the doors, but we still have to do the work."

EMPLOYMENT

Bagged Lunches, Bus Tickets, Clothing, Job Referrals, Resume Preparation, Research, Work Boots, Job Skills Training.

"At first, Jill and I went there for meals, but the Outreach Workers — who still work at Our Place today — helped me get my disability benefits, and then they got us housed," says Mark. "After we were housed, our lives started to get better."

Once he was housed, Mark wanted to start making money again. The staff at Our Place helped him secure a contract with the City of Victoria to clean graffiti off the walls of downtown buildings.

"I really enjoy doing that," he says.

Along with volunteering at Our Place, Mark is also part of the S.O.L.I.D. outreach team who offer support to their peers, provide information and resources, collect used syringes, and distribute harm reduction supplies.

"When John started working in custodial, we would chat as we passed each other in the halls," says Our Place Communications Director Grant McKenzie. "But then one day he showed me photos of his artwork, and I knew we had to do something with that talent." After completing several, large-scale pieces in the Drop-In and being featured in the newsletter, John is now working on several commissions from art lovers in the city.

HEALTH

Acupuncture, Acupressure, Alcoholics Anonymous, Mental Health and Addiction Counselling, Chiropractic, Dental Hygiene, First Aid, Foot Care, Hair Cuts, Narcotics Anonymous, Showers, Vision Testing, Reiki, Tai Chi, Art Therapy, Medical Room.

"It's important that we provide a sacred place for indigenous women who have suffered abuse in their lives," says Nancy McFarland, a clinical counsellor who runs a healing program at Our Place. "The residential schools program created 'spiritual homelessness' for so many people."

Transforming a storage closet off the women's washroom into a Medical Room has been a blessing for family members in our Drop-In area. This small room provides a safe and private space for visiting Street Nurses to conduct vaccinations and examinations, while also opening the door for more medical services.

Paramedics and St. John's Ambulance volunteers now provide weekly clinic services that treat and triage medical conditions ranging from minor injuries to seriously infected wounds. "Our Place provides volunteers with an opportunity to give

back to the community and make a difference in people's lives," says St. John Ambulance Victoria Board Chair and retired Fire Chief Dave Hodgins. Each day approximately 10 - 12 patients check into the clinic for assessment.



Our Values

Unconditional Love

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

Hope

We are founded on the belief 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.

PET CARE

Vets for Pets, Pet Food Bank at Our Place.

Everybody is so excited to see her that sometimes we wonder if a rock star has dropped into our courtyard when Dr. Jane Vermeulen and her volunteer crew of veterinary specialists arrive for their monthly Vets For Pets program. At her regular clinic, Jane and her wonderful crew of local veterinarians and student practitioners vaccinate, treat and recommend treatment for a small, furry army of dogs, cats, ferrets and more. Pet owners can also access the Pet Food Bank at Our Place, operated weekly by a small team of fantastic volunteers.

"I wish you guys had more cat litter," says Veronica as her cat, Buffy, peers out from her soft-sided carrier. "But I'm just so happy this (Vet For Pets) service is available, 'cause I'd rather go hungry myself than not be able to feed Buffy. She means everything to me."

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

Grief & Loss Support Group , Multi-Faith Chapel, Pastoral Care, Weddings & Memorials, Psychotherapy, Bible Study, First Nations Morning Circle, Residential School Survivors Counselling, Meditation.

"Spiritual support is being there to listen and share," says Chaplain Julianne Kasmer. "People need, and want, to be heard at a heart level."

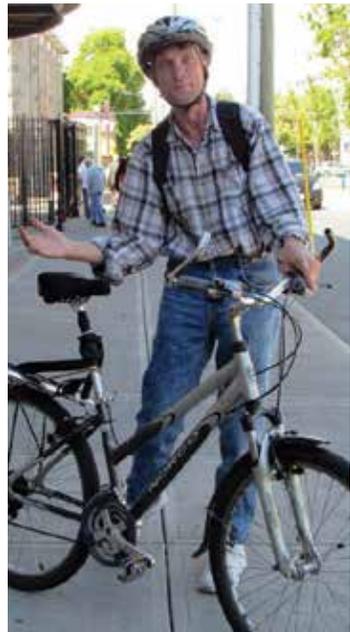
A lack of faith is not unusual for someone suffering from addiction and abuse. It's the strength that person shows in wanting to reconnect with his or her creator that is truly remarkable. "I pray to God every day," says Rosie as she quietly sips on a hot cup of coffee. "I pray for forgiveness, sure, but mostly I pray for enough strength to get through the day. I also pray for my family, and friends who are on the street. I hope that God will help them find the way back into the light. We need faith. It's what gives us courage and what gives us strength."

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Advocacy, Counselling, Referrals to Long-term Housing, Life Skills Training, Residential Support Workers, Mental Health & Addiction Support, Landlord & Tenant Support.

Transitioning people from street entrenchment to stable housing is an ongoing battle filled with highs and lows. Our Place has three floors and 45 units of transitional housing for the hardest to house. This year our housing department started a new initiative that transformed the top floor into a recovery floor, moving those residents who wanted to live their sobriety in a more focused and supportive environment. And the results have been impressive.

"It's a place of shelter and calm from the chaos," says Resident Support Worker Darren. "The recovery floor is creating a community where residents are stepping up to help each other."



A Year in Review

Through hard work and dedication, we meet a variety of critical needs. Here's a snapshot of this past fiscal year's services and supports made possible by our generous donors.

Open
7 days
per week,
52 weeks
per year

579,002
meals served

*157,314 increase
from 2013/2014

37,783
volunteer
hours

*A savings of
over \$1,000,000

10,007
hot
showers

*2,021 increase
from 2013/2014

2,271 one-on-one
sessions with
outreach workers

24 long-term
residents transitioned
through our housing
program

920
housing
advocacy
referrals

1,909
crisis
interventions
by trained staff

68
detox and
treatment
referrals
provided

497
employment
referrals

443
legal
referrals

1,389
ministry
advocacy

618
footbaths

876
medical
services
referrals

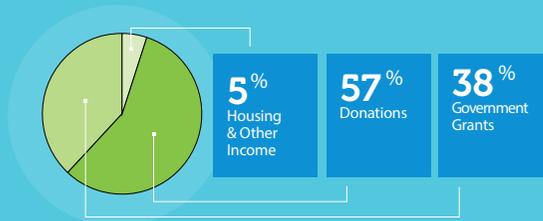
633
financial
support
services

507
haircuts

Financial Supports

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
\$5,043,815



Expenses
\$4,777,169



Total Surplus	\$ 266,646
Allocation to Operating and Capital Reserves	\$ 266,646
Net Surplus	\$ 0

Our financial information is based on audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2015.

Vision for the Future

This past year has been about building upon our successes in meeting the basic needs of our family members, while offering life-changing opportunities.

Our goal is to open our doors in the evening again this winter, with the continued aim of making this a financially sustainable part of our year-round operation.

We have ambitious plans to continue our growth in programs and services to bring healing, health and education to those we serve.

Our vision remains strong, and we invite you to partner with us.

With your generous support, Our Place can continue to bring hope and belonging to our community's most vulnerable citizens.



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At Our Place, we serve our family with love and respect. We work for social justice for Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens.



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ourplace

Hope and Belonging

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