

SPRING 2021

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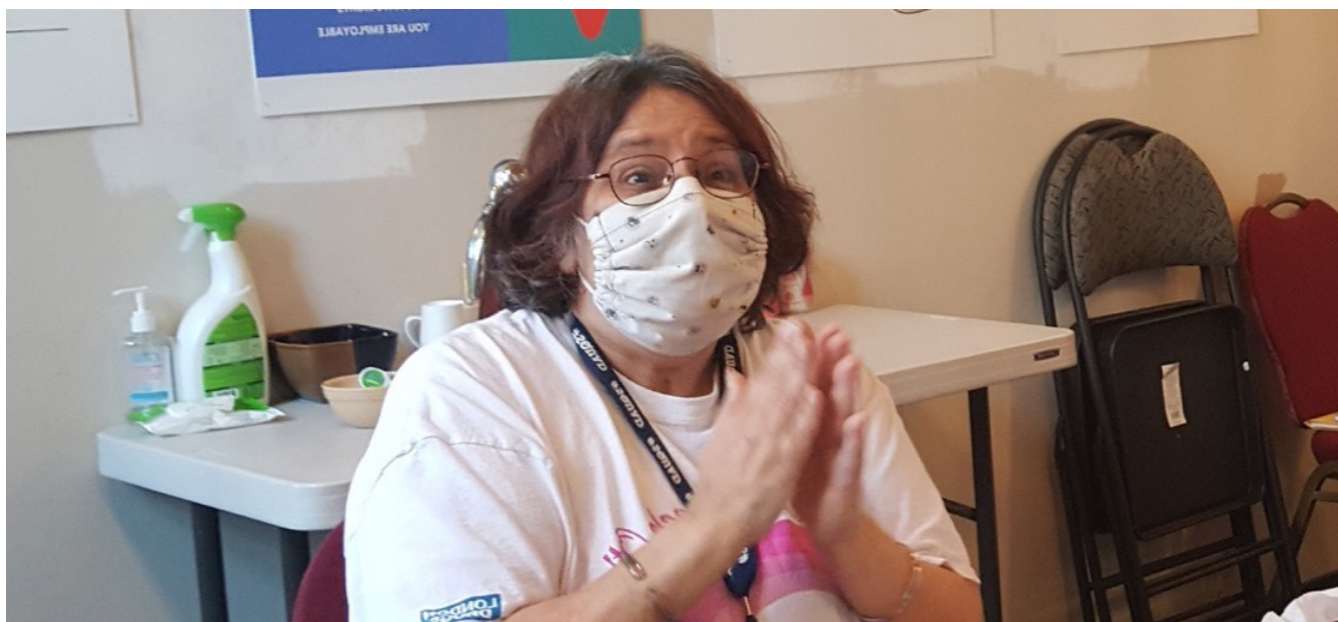
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## PORTRAITS OF SUCCESS



*"I have been a client of Our WorkPlace for a few years. I have support in all areas of my life; not just workshops but also one on one time with staff. I've achieved a huge amount of guidance in self-respect, self-esteem and confidence, which I can apply to my everyday life. My hands way up to Ashley, Bre and Paula who have always supported me even when I was wrong. They didn't give up on me, they encouraged me."*

**Darshen** (digital job hunter and Women in Progress workshop participant)

# OUR VOLUNTEER FACILITATORS

*Our WorkPlace is grateful for the commitment our skilled volunteer facilitators have made to the clients we serve. We will be profiling each of them individually in future issues of "Hire Ground". In this issue we acknowledge the contributions made by Alison Dunatov to our pre-employment workshop series.*



**ALISON** has been volunteering as a workshop facilitator at Our WorkPlace since the program's inception in 2018. Having returned to Victoria from living in the UK for a number of years, she was saddened to see how the issues of homelessness and drug addiction had taken hold in the community and looked for ways she could help address them. It was her father – a volunteer "greeter" at the drop-in – who introduced her to Our Place. Soon afterwards she

met the staff at the society's employment program, who quickly recognized that Alison's coaching background would be an asset to the pre-employment workshops they were running. When asked about her experiences facilitating workshops at Our WorkPlace, Alison said that she has been struck by the need of participants to be seen and to be valued, their willingness to engage, their intense emotions and their gratitude for the opportunity to be heard. She has also been impressed by the optimism and depth of wisdom that so many of the participants in her workshops exhibit. "I see little shining stars in the room," she says, reinforcing for her that no-one has to stay where they are, in spite of the fact that their situation may be less than optimal. In terms of her approach to facilitation, Alison says she suspends all assumptions and models curiosity and openness, all the while helping participants to challenge their own assumptions. Above all, she strives to plant seeds of hope and to challenge individuals to imagine a future that's different than the one they see right now. Alison stresses that it doesn't always have to be about working, but rather being able to contribute through volunteering. She hopes others in the community will aspire to be part of the program being offered through Our WorkPlace. As Alison says, "the past doesn't determine our future."

When not volunteering at Our WorkPlace, Alison is a part-time life and executive coach and full-time mom to two lively (and lovely) teenage boys. She enjoys walking her golden retriever at the beach and experimenting in the kitchen.



## SHERYL

Sheryl is a Registered Nurse, and Course Educator at the University of Victoria. She thrives on being in nature, live performances and socializing with friends & family.



## JENNIFER

Jennifer was born and raised on Vancouver Island, and has lived in Victoria for 20 years. She runs a thriving financial services business and takes on contract work that inspires and delights her. When not working, Jennifer rides her bike with her daughter, builds trains with her son, and plays tactical combat board games with her husband (and any friend that want to take part!).



## TATIANA

Tatiana is a Learning & Development and HR professional, passionate about helping others. She enjoys connecting with people through learning and hearing their perspectives. Creativity is a big part of her life and in her free time she enjoys arts and crafts, including card-making and paint by number.



## AVRIL

Avril has enjoyed a multi-decade career in marketing and communications. She is a mum of two incredible humans and one sweet rescue dog, CiCi, loves to hike, cook and sit by a fire.



## NANCY

Nancy moved to Victoria from Montreal a few years ago, where she worked for 20 years as a community worker and group animator. Previously, she was a psychiatric nurse. Nancy loves Victoria and living closer to her children and grandchildren.



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### PEOPLE IN PROGRESS (PIP)

MAY 4 TO MAY 28

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY  
1.00 - 2.15PM

### WOMEN IN PROGRESS (WIP)

JUNE 15 TO JULY 13

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY  
1.00 - 2.15PM

### DIGITAL JOB HUNTERS COMPUTER COURSE

MAY 3 TO MAY 31 & JUNE 14 TO JULY 7  
MONDAY AND WEDNESDAY  
10.30AM - 12.00PM

To register for the groups, please contact: Ashley  
at [ashleym@ourplacesociety.com](mailto:ashleym@ourplacesociety.com)  
or call her at 778-817-0354.

Ashley will make an initial 'intake' appointment with you  
and tell you more about the groups and what to expect.

## VEE'S CORNER

*"Live out of your imagination,  
not your history." Stephen R. Covey*

### A LITTLE HUMOUR

A customer in a store who looked like a classic fashionable businessperson was asked as he left the checkout if he would like to do a quick three-minute survey. "I couldn't possibly," he said. "I have a date with destiny." Moral of the story: no-one wants to take a survey when they're on their way to a better future!

*Vee*

## WHAT OUR CLIENTS ARE SAYING

*"My name is Anthony. I recently tried to find a job on my own at the height of Covid with very little success, until one day I was driving down the road looking out the window of a backseat when I saw a sign that read "Next Steps" (now known as Our WorkPlace). It mentioned something about employment, so later that day I returned and went inside. Once inside, I was welcomed by a very warm staff member who said she might be able to help me when I told her that I was having difficulty finding a job. I made an appointment to come back the following week where she helped me complete a resume. We had discussed the kinds of work I was looking for, and janitorial came up. Two days later, she told me she had an interview lined up for me for a custodial position at Our Place Society. The day after my interview, I found out I got the job and I have been employed now for more than five months and loving every day of it. More importantly, I'm finally able to imagine a future for myself."*



*Anthony  
at work.*

## OUR IMPACT IN OUR COMMUNITY

Our WorkPlace works with supportive local employers who understand the benefits of offering employment to clients who need extra support starting out. “One of our recent successes came to us with a client who spent the majority of his life in prison,” said Ashley, Manager of Our WorkPlace. “The only work experience

he had was from behind bars. Today he has been employed for five months and has found safe, reliable housing,” she added. “This past February, 20 people applied to our job readiness program, and already three clients have obtained employment.”

