



nourish
hope

How your gifts really can nourish lives

Our Place outreach workers nourish hope and encourage change

It's 6:30am inside 919 Pandora, and the aroma of breakfast cooking and coffee brewing are coming from the Our Place kitchen as staff and volunteers are buzzing around getting ready to serve our family members for the day.

"As soon as we get there in the morning, we start by making it as warm and inviting as possible for everyone," says Nina, an Addictions Outreach Worker who has been working at Pandora for over a year. "Coffee's on, the kitchen has food coming for everyone, bathrooms and hygiene services are open, we're getting clothing ready – this is our family members' first point of contact each day and we're there for them, as soon as we open the doors. There's a core team of us, including our volunteers, who are absolutely critical, working together to get the basic services to people every day."



Outreach workers like Nina bring smiles and kind, listening ears to the folks we serve each day.

Once basic needs are addressed, outreach workers can focus on connecting with our family members in deeper, more meaningful ways. Adds Nina: "Whether it's helping them to make a phone call, or being there if they need to sit and cry with someone for an hour, or if they need to figure out how to find housing, or where to go for addiction support – it's all about being there for whatever that family member needs right then. Some people come to us for togetherness and some people come to us in pure survival mode. We meet them right where they are in that moment and try to provide the care they need, whatever that may be."

Nina was there when a family member needed help one day in the computer room to fill out an online form. "We started chatting and he was telling me his story when we realized we shared a passion for art. We started talking about what we could do with that and how it might help play a role in his, and others' healing journeys."

And that's where the Tuesday Drop-in Art Program at 919 Pandora comes into play. "The conversations sparked the idea of bringing back the Tuesday afternoon art program where family members could have access to donated art supplies and an open, non-judgmental space to express themselves through their art. It provides a bit of time to just relax and chill in a calm, clean environment for awhile," says Nina. "Anyone is welcome to grab a seat, a brush, and do art – whatever that means for them."

“The art program has provided an opportunity for the volunteers and me to nourish a sense of hope and community and connect with family members we may have never otherwise connected with, through a shared enjoyment of art. And it can be a useful time to discuss resources that are available to family members in a positive environment.”

Especially for those who are going through intense times, often suffering from homelessness, addiction, and mental illness, it can be an activity that brings some light into their day. Adds Nina, “We had multiple family members participating on a weekly basis, and some have even begun a collection of their art. For one family member specifically, who left an abusive living situation and now lives with severe anxiety, the art program has become a source of comfort and release of tension.”

“It’s something that eases their anxiety. I feel blessed to be involved in a program that values creative expression and can also be a place of healing for someone who is suffering. I look forward to the chance to connect with people. It only takes a few conversations with someone you can trust, and it can change lives,” she says.

Along with providing social support through things like art programs, bingo and knitting, outreach workers at Our Place provide critical life-saving roles as frontline workers and responders to medical emergencies among many other things. Adds Nina, “We do a ‘block walk’ several times a day, where we walk



The Tuesday Drop-in Art Program is just one example of a program that can nourish hope in so many. It is currently on hold because of COVID, but will resume as soon as we are able to safely.

the neighbourhood around 919 Pandora looking for people at risk of overdose, or who are in medical distress. Then we can radio Our Place paramedics for help right away.”

Our Place outreach workers also provide much-needed assistance – not just on Pandora. “We’re case workers as well for some family members. We drive clients to doctor’s appointments, to detox, to get medications, or whatever the case may be. I’ve even dropped off a few of the Tenant Starter Kits that some of our amazing donors have put together as people get back on their feet and start to find housing. Watching the looks on their faces as they start their lives fresh again – if that isn’t about nourishing hope in our family members, I don’t know what is.”

Nina is one of the outreach workers at 919 Pandora who start the continuum of services we strive to offer. When folks come to Our Place for a meal, they can leave with so much more because people like Nina are there for them when they need help and support.

You are the ones who help nourish this hope each and every day as we turn your donations into helping hands, from your place to Our Place.

Please donate now!

From its humble beginnings as a simple downtown Victoria refuge, Our Place has grown from an inner-city community centre to employing 275+ staff and 250+ volunteers who operate a continuum of critical services in locations throughout the CRD.

- 919 Pandora Avenue
- Muncey Place on Blanshard Street
- Capital City Centre Hotel on Douglas Street
- Howard Johnson Hotel on Gorge Road
- Tiny Homes Village on Caledonia Avenue
- Russell Street Shelter
- My Place Shelter on Yates Street
- First Metropolitan Church Shelter
- Pandora Night Shelter
- New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community in View Royal
- Jaymac Place Recovery Home
- Our WorkPlace on Quadra Street