



**ourplace**  
Hope and Belonging

# nourish dignity

*Tiny Homes Village is home to 30 residents.*

## How your gifts are nourishing lives

### How housing outreach workers nourish dignity and self-worth, 24/7

*Your gifts help people heal, find dignity and hope, so that they can continue their life journeys on a positive path by finding secure, permanent housing. Our Place staff can provide 24/7 support that is so desperately needed. Here's an inside look at some of our sites, and see the impact you can have with your summer donation.*

#### My Place

My Place is a transitional shelter that offers those who have been experiencing homelessness an opportunity to live in a temporary space inside one of 48 separated pods with beds and secure lockers for their belongings. Residents of the shelter receive three meals a day prepared on-site, and have access to showers and washrooms, as well as computers, a library, and laundry services.

"It's a quiet, respectful community," says Sarrah, site supervisor at My Place. "It's like having 50 roommates." Currently, My Place provides shelter to primarily men (and a few women) over the age of 45, with the oldest resident being 72 years old. The average stay is about a year, and the shelter is often the first step in someone's journey away from homelessness.

"People come to us straight from the streets or the



*Laundry facilities are available at all of our housing sites. Wearing clean, dry clothes is something that can be taken for granted – and it is something as simple as this that can provide a sense of pride and dignity in someone.*

local mat programs, and the first thing we do is assess where they're at and what kind of supports they need," Sarrah adds. Housing outreach workers at each of our locations, including My Place, welcome people, and act as a triage team as soon as they arrive. "We find out immediately what their experience with homelessness has been, and if they need mental health, substance use, or other supports. Our focus is to get people connected with what they need right away so we can get them stabilized as soon as possible."

Residents often socialize through things like bingo nights and arts and crafts. "A lot of people here are friends, they hang out together in their pods and play games. People get along well, and we encourage that sense of belonging here."

#### Tiny Homes Village

The first of its kind in Victoria, Tiny Homes Village is made up of 30 micro-homes made from 100-square foot shipping containers. Funded by Aryze Developments and the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness, each are equipped with a bed, nightstand, wardrobe, and small fridge for one person. They have electricity, but no cooking capacity; residents have two meals delivered, a cold breakfast and a hot dinner, and have access to a common area to reheat food. Showers and washrooms are communal, with four dedicated shower/toilet rooms as well as one separate toilet room.

Beck, site supervisor at Tiny Homes Village, has been with Our Place for 8 years, and has seen just how living on the streets has a profound impact on a person's self-worth and sense of dignity, and how having a roof overhead and support in place to find a hand up can make all the difference in the world.

"The majority of our folks came here from encampments, so they were experiencing absolute homelessness," Beck says. "We have one person

who has been truly homeless since 2005, camping in parks, sleeping in doorways, basically in pure survival mode. He told us that being at Tiny Homes Village has really changed his life. He's eating more. He's sleeping more. He can shower whenever he wants. He has a place to put his stuff where he doesn't have to worry about it going missing. Because he's here, we are able to help him get to doctors' appointments and get him the help he so desperately needed. Being here has really helped him get to the next step."

Garden plots and picnic tables are also set up for people to socialize with one another. "On really nice days, you'll see everybody out on their porches, talking to each other, sharing things," says Beck. "In the summertime the residents even go to the park together to play Bocce ball. It really is its own little community."

### Capital City Centre

The Capital City Centre (CCC) hotel currently houses 80 - 90 residents in typical one-bed rooms, each complete with its own washroom and a small fridge. Residents receive two hot meals a day – breakfast and dinner – and hot beverages are offered in the front lobby. There's also access to laundry facilities, an indoor secure bike storage, as well as a bike area outside. Our Place staff are available to assist people 24/7. Most of the people that live at CCC are over 40 years old, and a few residents are senior citizens.

Robert, site supervisor at CCC and an Our Place employee of 6.5 years, says, "I want everyone who lives here to know that we're working for them, and advocating for them. That's what we're here to do, to work with them and hopefully get them to a place where they want to be." Restoring dignity in people is about letting them know that they are seen, that they matter and are recognized when they are often the ones forgotten. He adds, "Simply calling someone by their name is of utmost importance because they know they're being heard, and we can have those important conversations."

***Home has many meanings, involving much more than shelter. It's a place where basic human necessities and a place of unconditional acceptance are provided.***

***Please join us in nourishing dignity in people so that they can find a pathway to safe and secure housing.***



*Each of the Our Place locations is its own community, where real friendships develop and are nurtured. A sense of belonging nourishes self-worth and self-esteem.*

### Howard Johnson Hotel

Our Place operates the housing program at the leased Howard Johnson (HoJo) Hotel, and works with other onsite service providers to support the residents. Residents have their own rooms and washrooms, as well as a small fridge and other amenities. They also receive two meals daily, and have access to the onsite services including a clothing room, laundry, and a library.

Site supervisor at the HoJo is Rachel, who has been working at Our Place for two years. "Our main focus is to help people navigate the housing system," says Rachel. "Just completing the forms can be a challenge for people and it's a hard system to figure out unless you know how to do it. We also help them get ID, get on income assistance – anything that will help them move forward with their housing."

A mixed population lives at the HoJo, with the oldest resident being 90 years old. Rachel adds: "We have some real gems here. He's a veteran who lost his home. He doesn't need a lot of our help most of the time – except for with his online dating profile."

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 300+ volunteers who operate a continuum of critical services in 12 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 in Saanich
- Our WorkPlace on Quadra Street