

# Our Place Love Hope Belonging





# Message from our Chief Executive Officer and Board Chair

This last year was dominated by the twin pandemics of COVID-19 and lethal fentanyl overdoses that challenged our staff, family members, resources and volunteers. However, it also highlighted the strength and fortitude of our organization.

Despite these challenges, our staff showed up to work with both a generosity of spirit and a strong resolve to help those who needed it most. We never once closed our doors, and all our staff came to work every day – even when they could have chosen not to. They were truly essential workers.

And while the pain of so many overdoses took its toll, creating a deep sadness in our community, there were also good things that happened. We took charge of numerous temporary transitional housing sites where we housed and sheltered over 500 people who were previously homeless. We also saw more men than ever before enter our New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community and commit to overcoming their addictions.

We saw light return to people's eyes; we heard words of thanks from people who rarely spoke; and through the tears and smiles we saw the building of community.

We also had to weather the storm of public opinion. Many people were angry and scared, especially with unsupervised camping in our parks. There was a sense that everybody struggling with homelessness was involved in criminality. Thankfully, our supporters know our values and understand that we have never condoned criminality or tolerated violence, and that we simply wanted to help those who were genuinely vulnerable and desperately in need of safe shelter.

We spoke up when others were silent because we want to see change. We believe in supportive housing; we believe in complex care; and we want to see much more mental health supports on our streets especially for the most unwell and vulnerable. With more permanent housing coming on-line in the near future, we are optimistic that our voice is being heard.

Thank you for your ongoing support in our efforts to improve the lives of our community's most vulnerable members

With much gratitude,

**Julian Daly**  
CEO

**Allan Saunders**  
Board Chair



# Programs & Services

## Growth, Opportunity & Challenges

Despite COVID-19 and the extreme challenges of continuing to deal with a deadly overdose pandemic, the 2020-2021 fiscal year was an exciting time of growth and opportunity for Our Place Society. We housed over 500 men and women direct from the streets who now have access to more supports than ever before.

Our staff stepped up like never before, working with energy and compassion to make sure people were fed, received shelter, hygiene, and medical supports.

## Nourishing Change

Our Place continued to serve three meals per day, 365 days of the year. We averaged 700 meals per day at our Pandora location, but also delivered and served meals to numerous temporary transitional homes and shelters. The meal program provided a safe place to meet with friends, find community, and connect to services. Over 90% of people accessing our services first came to Our Place for a meal before accessing other supports.

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## Compassionate Outreach

In 2020-2021, we pulled out all the stops to remain open for extended hours (6:30am to 9pm) all 12 months of the year. Open seven days per week, the Drop-In on Pandora Avenue is a welcoming place for people who would otherwise have nowhere to relax. This centre is particularly valued by family members experiencing homelessness or severe poverty, or even just for those seeking a sense of community. While many will use the Drop-In as a safe place to connect with friends, they also have access to a wide range of services provided by a team of professional outreach workers and volunteers.

## Health and Hygiene

The ongoing pandemic in 2020-21, saw our Paramedic/Outreach team respond to over 4,300 medical situations in and around 919 Pandora Avenue. This response was for everything from reversal of overdose to wound care and pre-hospitalization assessment. Our Place also provided over 10,000 showers, in 30-minute bookings. Each shower comes with a selection of hygiene products, and are complimented by other services provided by volunteer professionals.



**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.**



## Vital Volunteers

2020 was a challenging year for volunteer supported organizations across Canada and around the world. Our Place rose to this challenge by safely creating virtual volunteer opportunities and timely re-engaging volunteers back into operational roles while adhering to all health and safety protocols.

Although our numbers were significantly lower, volunteer contributions were invaluable. Behind friendly, masked faces and plexiglass walls, our volunteers graciously helped out in any way feasible: in reception roles, sanitizing stations, clothing distribution, thank you calls, and rallying around donations. We also kept in touch with our volunteers with weekly updates. Supporting everyone's safety was the key to connection during this challenging time. There are now over 300 volunteers starting back in action.

In early 2020, Our Place was declared an essential service by the province in response to COVID-19. Our Place staff worked diligently to provide thousands of meals, as well as outreach, health, hygiene and other basic needs throughout the pandemic.

## Reaching Isolated Seniors

Thanks to funding support from the United Church of Canada Foundation, the City of Victoria, the federal New Horizons for Seniors program, and private donors, the 50+ Club enjoyed a year packed with exercise, picnics, food outings and tours. From upcycling old bicycle rims into a trellis for our 50+Club Yates Street Community Garden plot to visiting the Royal BC Museum. We also went on the Victoria Harbour Ferry, and enjoyed picnics at Willows Beach, Gonzales Bay and Government House.

## Linking People to Jobs

Next Steps to Employment has gone through a massive transformation beginning with our name – **Our WorkPlace**. Our latest program, Digital Job Hunters, was launched in January 2021. The program gives our clients the opportunity to learn basic computer skills in order to independently do job searches and updates to a resume. We continue to offer both the co-ed People in Progress, which provides employability skills, and Women in Progress, which offers employability skills through a female lens. We've been fortunate to add new volunteer facilitators whose talents and knowledge have rounded out our program offerings. In response to the need for basic tech help, we created a once-a-week drop-in for tech support which has proven to be very popular.

Employed: 47%

Looking for work: 37%

Gender breakdown:

Male: 55.5%

Female: 40%

Gender Diverse: 3%

## A Year in Review

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

\* COVID-19 has affected all totals

Our Place offers food, shelter, hygiene, and much more, 365 days a year

268,600 meals served

500+ people housed

7,749 volunteer hours

10,241 hot showers in Our Place hygiene

27,689 charitable donations

4,320 paramedic/outreach medical assessments

427 supportive housing referrals

11 managed facilities

62 detox and treatment referrals

370 unique storage facility visits

61 BCID I.D. referrals

36 birth certificates

175 foot care treatments

346 medical room visits

24 rent/hydro supports

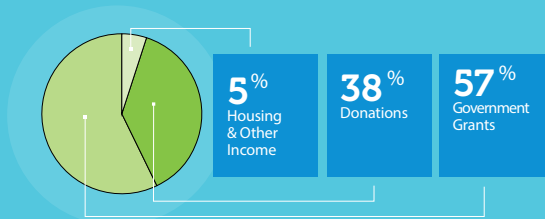
\$238 average donor gift



# Financial Supports

Thousands of caring supporters joined us in helping Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens. Here is the breakdown of how we carefully used donor & government dollars to support our mission:

Revenue  
\$15,291,722



Expenses  
\$15,081,351



Operating Surplus

\$ 210,371

Our financial information is based on audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2021



MacLean's Magazine ranked Our Place Society as one of the best 100 Charities in Canada for 2020

## New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community

The last year at the New Roads Program has been very busy and focused on growth:

In the past year, we restructured the front-line staffing model to better serve the population and to ensure accountability. We created a site supervisor position and team lead designations in the fall of 2020. The Centre focused on creating supports and programming around the men who are in Phase Three and Phase Four to better support them in their re-integration into the larger community. This has included the creation of a Community Care Coordinator position that focuses on transition and community support for men.

We have made an intentional effort to strengthen our relationship with our partners to increase awareness about New Roads and the program we offer. We focused primarily on our partners from Health, Corrections and Community Agencies. This has led to more referrals and higher levels of occupancy. We were at 15 residents in the fall of 2020 and by the end of the fiscal year we were at 30



residents. We have worked very closely with probation to explore how we can together serve the men more efficiently. In March of 2021, we began to have a probation worker who comes twice per month and is now our primary contact for men on probation.

We have begun an Educational Program with the South Island Distance Educational Schooling Program (SIDES). To date we have had six enrolled for upgrading. We have also had two men begin their post secondary schooling.

Began our partnership with the Serenity Gardens Program to plant our seedlings and look at further work together at the farm in the future. Our gardening program has begun to provide produce for our kitchen as well as sending some to 919 Pandora. We also welcomed 25 egg-bearing and happy-go-lucky chickens. We have focused a great deal of supports on the Our Work as Therapy Program. The men are very engaged and have a sense of pride in the work they do.

We have spent time reviewing the program, including all four phases of the treatment program itself. We also completed an in-depth review of the program information that is distributed to potential residents and partners within the community to ensure that it is strength based and accurately reflects the program.

Early indication is that those residents who remain in the program benefit in all areas of their lives, and for many this is the first time they have been successful.

## Donors Make a Difference Every Day!

Help responding to urgent needs came from homes, businesses and estates for a record-setting total of 27,689 charitable donations. In-kind contributions poured forth, too. We pivoted to hold virtual events and online auctions while donors ensured that core services continued at Our Place's 11 locations. Our heartfelt gratitude goes out to all who selflessly thought of others even while their own lives were affected.



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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**

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