



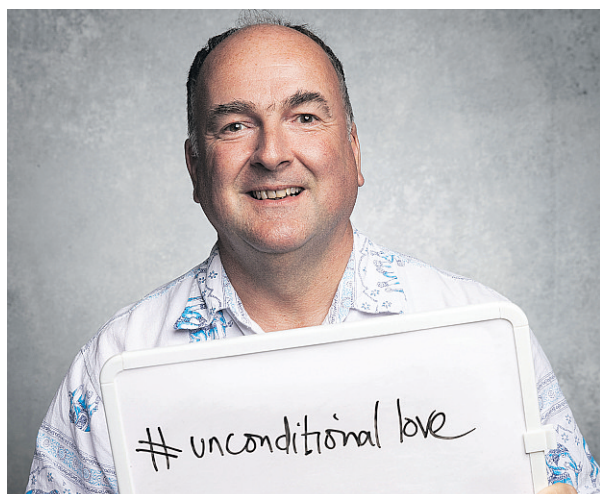
**ourplace**

Hope and Belonging

**nourish**  
*community*



# Hope in a place of despair



**By Julian Daly, Our Place CEO**

**A**t Our Place, we talk a lot about hope and belonging. These are concepts that sound simple and yet are extremely complex.

What is hope? The answer often depends on where you are at in life.

Over the last two years, with the help of the provincial government, we have managed

to house over 500 people. For many of the people who were previously on the streets or camping in parks, that bed in a shelter, Tiny Town, or individual room in a hotel was their first taste of hope. But it was also the start of the toughest leg in their new journey.

That first burst of hope – a safe place to live – needed to be nurtured as people now struggled to grasp the depths of their addiction, mental-health struggles, domestic situation, loneliness, and despair. Our empathetic staff quickly saw this need and began building connections, one on one, to help in the best way they could. In this environment of nutritious meals, restful sleep and safety, most of our residents thrived. Others continued to struggle, however, as they confronted and wrestled with their personal demons.

For those who are thriving, the promise of permanent housing looms on the horizon, which keeps their hope strong. But what happens to those who are still struggling on our streets? Where is their hope?

This is a question that plagues us as we witness tents being erected on Pandora Avenue – staying within line-of-sight of Our Place for safety from violence and fear of a

poisoned drug supply – and people curling up on sidewalks with a sleeping bag or tarp to cover themselves. These are the people who have been left behind; those who, for a multitude of reasons, have not been able either to find or thrive in transitional housing.

Some of these folk get up early every morning and head inside Our Place on Pandora where we continue to offer showers, food, washrooms and clothing. By doing this, we seek to reignite at least a spark of hope. Even if that spark is fragile, it can be the starting point in a journey toward health, peace, and some happiness.

Our Place remains a home for those who are homeless. Inside our doors, people find sanctuary, not just from the elements of rain, sun, wind and snow, but from their own torment.

In these challenging times hope is rarely easy, but I know it is necessary.

And with your continued support, I also know it is possible.

*Sincerely,  
Julian Daly*

## NOURISHING HOPE IN LIVES TODAY!

To donate to Our Place Society please call 250-940-5060,  
email [donors@ourplacesociety.com](mailto:donors@ourplacesociety.com), or visit us at [ourplacesociety.com/donate](http://ourplacesociety.com/donate)

TV SCENE INSIDE





**G**rowing numbers of vulnerable folks are struggling to meet basic needs. Among those skipping meals, cutting back on groceries and most stressed about rising food costs are people depending on old age security, pensions, disability payments, or social assistance. This

leaves some up to 50% below the poverty line. What an impossible juggling act for them.

When people don't know where to turn to find a meal when they simply can't afford it, Our Place is there.

Our Place is the largest daily

emergency meal supplier on Vancouver Island. Three nutritious meals are served daily at no charge to all experiencing poverty, homelessness, addictions, and/or physical and mental health issues. In the first six months of 2022, demand increased by 35% to 185,000 meals,

and the heightened need is expected to continue for the foreseeable future. These emergency meals are funded by compassionate, concerned citizens like you.

A nutritious meal is often what brings those we serve through our doors, but when people come to us for meals, we get the chance to spend time with them and offer them some support and care. We work to nourish the whole person – physically, socially, spiritually, and psychologically – and connect them to a path of positive change. At our dozen locations, they receive many forms of nourishment.

When folks come to us for a meal, it's for more than just food on a plate. It's for compassion. It's for community. It's for belonging and acceptance.

Here's how donations made a real difference in the lives of those who came to Our Place during this past year, as reported in our 2021/22 Community Report (published Sept 2022).

## 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.

Our Place  
offers meals,  
shelter, showers,  
clothing & more,  
365 days a year

389,600  
meals served  
500+  
people housed

26,931  
charitable donations

4,635  
paramedic/outreach  
medical assessments

309  
active  
volunteers

196  
overdose  
reversals

82  
detox and  
treatment  
referrals

375  
unique storage  
facility visits

12,377  
hot showers

11  
managed  
facilities

203  
foot care  
treatments

375  
medical  
room visits

47  
rent/hydro  
supports

\$244  
average  
donor gift

11,031  
volunteer  
hours

38,300  
hot meals  
served at  
New Roads

Inflation rose to over 8% in June, the highest it has been in 39 years. Food costs have gone up by 10% since January and suppliers are warning of increases as much as 30% this year. Unfortunately donations to OPS have decreased recently. To continue to be able to offer meals to all those who struggle during these tough times, we must raise at least an additional \$530,000 this fiscal year.

We need your help. Please consider making a donation now.

Look for the special insert in today's newspaper to make a contribution, donate online at [www.ourplacesociety.com/donate](http://www.ourplacesociety.com/donate), or call us at 250-940-5060.

# Our WorkPlace



“People in Progress provided me with a gentle landing back into employment.”  
– Workshop participant”

“

“No matter how many times you fall, you can grow from it and learn.”

– PIP graduate

”

It’s all about ‘Back to School’ at Our WorkPlace, where staff at the employment centre on Quadra Street are gearing up for another intake of clients enrolled in the People in Progress program this October. With funding through the WorkBC Community and Employment Partnerships, the newly enhanced program runs 12 weeks in length and includes 6 weeks of employability skills workshops, a work experience placement and follow up.

Ashley MacDonald, manager of Our WorkPlace, sees transformations daily. “The courses we offer can be life-changing for people. Some get jobs as a result, and some gain skills that are invaluable in helping them start on a new path. Back to school is about fresh starts, and we’re here to help people find what that means for them.”

Our WorkPlace storefront supports people with unique challenges to

employment: homelessness, substance misuse, physical and mental health concerns, and survivors of trauma. Working with clients facing these barriers, Our WorkPlace staff welcome folks into a safe space where they are re-introduced into the workforce through job readiness training and life supports.

Skills training courses include stress management, conflict resolution, numeracy and budgeting 101, resume writing, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, social media management, business communications, retail business machines orientation, and essential customer service for the service industry. A digital job seekers workshop is funded by a generous donor who knows the power of e-connections.

Participants also receive certification courses in Serving It Right, SuperHost and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems. When they have completed their training, participants will be qualified

for customer service, cashier, retail sales, maintenance/security work, food service and kitchen-duty positions. Fifty percent of participants who completed People in Progress are already employed.

The informal group setting allows the students to step out of their comfort zone. “For many of our participants, combating isolation can be difficult,” she says. “We offer a community that celebrates the successes of one another.”

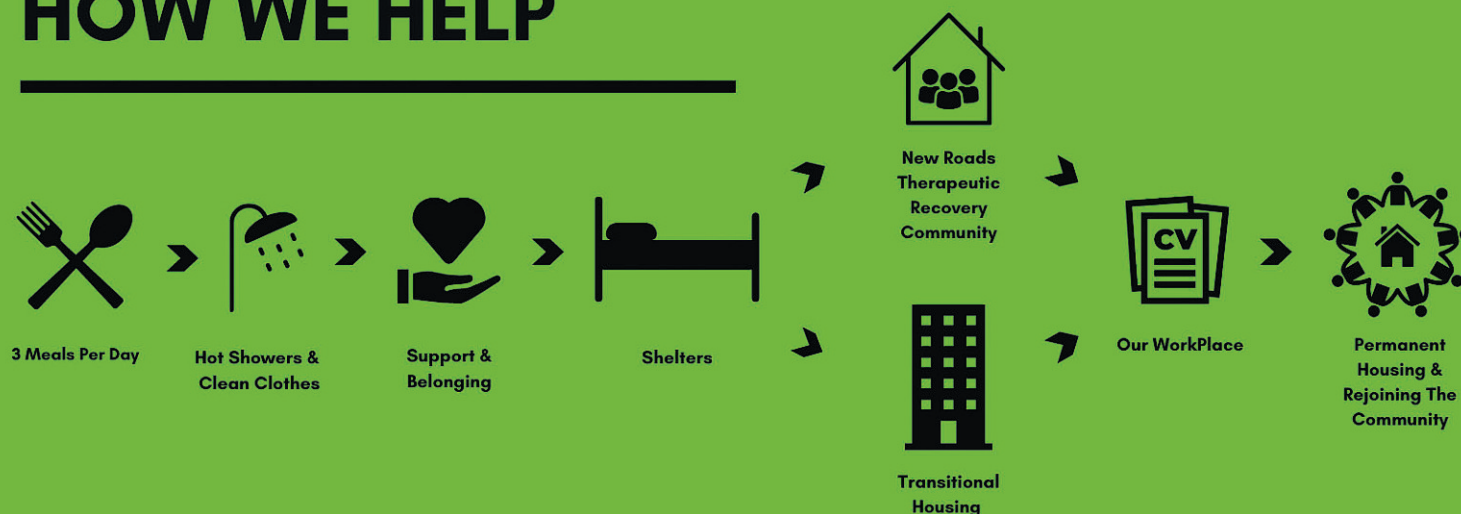
She adds, “Spreading needed joy is as important as a meal. They are people who’ve lived through more than we can imagine, and frankly, they teach us more than we teach them in many instances.”

To read the newsletter stories of success, to sign up or to learn how you can host a work experience student, please call 778-817-0354 or visit [ourplacesociety.com](http://ourplacesociety.com) and check under How We Help.

## Continuum of Care at Our Place

Our WorkPlace is just one of the programs offered at Our Place that encourages people on their pathways of change. We nourish people through a continuum of care, beginning with fulfilling basic needs like three meals a day, showers and hygiene, and clean, dry clothing. Safe shelter, recovery options, job training and much more provide a hand up to those experiencing homelessness. Along the way, people can find kind, compassionate Our Place staff and volunteers who support them on their journeys toward healthier, happier, more fulfilled lives within the larger community.

### HOW WE HELP





## OUR GRATITUDE



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Gardenworks (Saanich)  
Habit Coffee  
Heirloom Linens  
Helmcken Veterinary Clinic  
Hidden Valley Bed and  
Breakfast

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Highland Pacific Golf Course  
Horror Escape: The Experience  
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Hotel Grand Pacific  
Hotel Rialto  
Hotel Zed  
Hunt & Gather Hair Company  
Huntington Manor  
Il Covo Trattoria  
Il Terrazzo Ristorante  
Innovative Fitness  
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Mosi Bakery-Cafe  
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Resort  
Mt. Doug Golf Course  
Munro's Books  
Niche Grocerant  
North Park Bike Shop  
Oak Bay Beach Hotel  
Oasis Nails & Spa  
Olive This & More

Olympic View Golf Club  
Ooh La La Cupcakes  
Pacific Opera Victoria  
Patisserie La Roux  
Paws on Cook  
Pets West  
Pharmasave Broadmead  
Philosophy MD  
Photoswest  
Politano Cafe  
Prestige Oceanfront  
Resort  
Prestige Picture Framing  
Prima Strada Pizzeria  
Provenance Fine Things  
Red Barn Market  
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Eight of Victoria's top chefs competed in the Hungry Hearts culinary competition. This year's champion is Chef Robert Cassels of Saveur Restaurant (seventh from the left).



PwC were the presenting sponsors for Hungry Hearts. We thank them so much for their generosity and support!

Hungry Hearts guest speaker Mikala Kristensen spoke about how she overcame a life of homelessness and addiction and how, with the help of Our Place, she is now thriving, going to school, and working again.

