



# LIFE-SAVING CARE



ourplace

Hope and Belonging



# How You Can Ensure Life-Saving Paramedic Care for Vulnerable People

## Help Reduce Illness, Disability, and Premature Death on Our Streets

Most marginalized community members struggling with poverty, homelessness, drug, and alcohol addictions have complex health issues. [According to the most recent homeless count in BC](#), 90% were dealing with at least one medical problem and 66% had two or more health issues.

Another extensive study, [Still Dying On the Streets](#), captured the harsh realities of street life and premature death of street-involved people in BC. The median age of mortality of this demographic is 47 to 49, while the average for others in BC is 76.

## Address the Horrifying Death Toll from Opioid Poisoning Crisis

Since 2016, when a public health emergency was declared in BC, the opioid crisis had killed 11,414 people by the end of 2022. Sadly, the numbers keep rising at unprecedented rates. There were 737 deaths in Greater Victoria from illicit drug use over those six years according to the [BC Coroners Service \(see page 11\)](#) and the [infographic here](#). The number of illicit drug toxicity deaths in November and December 2022 equates to 7 deaths per day.

***They are someone's brother or sister, son or daughter, father or mother.***

## Open Doors to Healing and Reducing Health Care Costs

Members of the street community are almost always victims of trauma, abuse, isolation or brain injury. They are often reluctant to seek medical treatment through the public health care system because of stigma, fear of judgment, and past negative experiences that breed mistrust.

Outreach Paramedics provide first aid, wound care, and other basic health services at Our Place Society (OPS). They are professionals who are specially trained to understand the population, establish relationships of trust, and empathetically provide care and compassionate health services to individuals in all circumstances.







## OPS Paramedics are Critical Frontline Superheroes

Paramedic support workers are valued team members at the Community Centre at 919 Pandora on shift daily. From May 2022 to May 2023, they provided **248 overdose reversals** there and responded to **more than 2,000 other medical incidents** including heart attacks, trauma injuries and wound care. On an average day a paramedic will bandage six people with minor wounds and one with a severe wound. It can be a minor cut that's festered, or a stabbing, or a life threatening knock to the head. As one paramedic noted, for the unhoused looking after a wound "is kind of like getting a new roof when your house is on fire." Once patched up, the street guests can move from being in crisis to working with a grateful support worker, who can help navigate them toward resources and build on the trust and caring approach.

Their work reduces costly ambulance calls and ensures busy Island Health doctors are there to respond when others in the community need medical care, also appreciating that our teams work on the core area frontlines daily.

**OPS paramedics are vitally needed in this multi-discipline approach to respond to complex needs of more than 3,000 people that use the busy Community Centre annually.**

In addition, they also walk the block and respond to people in distress on the 900 block of Pandora. Support workers encourage users to consider entering treatment, such as at our New Roads therapeutic recovery community. Referrals to detox are tracked monthly. OPS works in close collaboration with Umbrella Addictions and Mental Health foundation and the downtown service providers to plan a healthy pathway to escape the clutches of addiction and mental health crises. We all benefit from a community who cares.

## Your contribution is more important than ever!

The essential medical care that the paramedics provide for those who are struggling with homelessness, poverty and/or addictions is made possible by charitable donations to Our Place Society. Funding for OPS paramedic care, radios or equipment is not provided by Island Health or other levels of government.

**Your contribution is needed more than ever this year to help mitigate rising costs, driven by the highest inflation in almost 40 years, and the rising demand for services.** These folks are the ones who have been hit hardest by the strain caused by the pandemic, food insecurity, the local economic downturn, and sky-high housing costs. Your gift can help save a life—the highest ROI on social impact investing. Your contribution can help ensure caring hands give a dad, a son, or a friend a chance to follow a healthier path.

## How You Can Help

Most marginalized community members struggle with poverty. The cost to provide the unique paramedic outreach team at Our Place's Community Centre in the downtown core area is \$400K/year for 3 full-time paramedics and 3 part-time support workers are also paramedics —[like Dax, who is featured in a video you can see here](#).

You can help the team deliver essential medical care and alleviate suffering by contributing to any of the following options:

- **\$73,000/year** would pay for a full-time paramedic position.
- **\$6,000/year** pays for medical kit supplies and life-saving oxygen canisters.
- **\$900** covers the cost of a two-way digital radio to summon a paramedic to the floor. We need 20 more; a private donor has pledged to underwrite 20 as well.
- **\$1,400** will ensure that care and compassionate lifesaving services are available on the week of your choosing, perhaps dedicated as a tribute to someone you love, or \$5,600/month.

## Donate in Your Own Way

Your gift will lighten the burden of others. You can support the program as a Circle of Love monthly donor or schedule a pledge to suit your own timetable. You may prefer to gift publicly-traded securities because of tax benefits, using the [form](#) on our Ways to Give webpage. We'll then work with your broker to redeem the shares. We happily accept these along with other giving options.

Cheques may be mailed to **Our Place Society**, at 94 Talcott Rd, Victoria, BC V9B 6L9. You can give online at [www.ourplacesociety.com](http://www.ourplacesociety.com) and receive an instant receipt, or by phone to our donor services line at 250-940-5060 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday to Friday.

## Recognition for Your Generous Gift

With your permission, we would happily offer some options to recognize your valued contribution on Our Place Society's "Our Gratitude" webpage, via our social media, named sticker on a paramedic kit, hosted in a meeting with a sponsored paramedic staff person, or other customized ways to show our appreciation—all of course in discussion with you, and according to your preferences.



*Contact me to learn more, or have a tour...and meet the team!*

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