



SENIORS' SUPPORT



ourplace

Hope and Belonging

Building Social Inclusion and Joy

Project Goal

Expanding outreach to support multi-barriered seniors in three shelter sites, as well as recruiting new folks, then supporting them in group activities, in hospital visits and one-to-one supports.

Demonstrated Need

- Having a senior and a steering committee plan and execute the gatherings and increasing outreach to other temporary housing facilities has built positive momentum as COVID restrictions reduced in 2022.
- Victoria is now the most expensive city in BC and one of the highest costs of living in Canada. The triple pandemic saw more renovictions, reduced access to health care and increased participation in the Seniors Connect program at Our Place.
- Two temporary housing facilities are slated to close or move in 2023 so more are at risk of homelessness. One third of the people who turn to Our Place for help or live in our nine housing sites are seniors. Seniors have unique needs, and require different mental, emotional, and physical supports than the other age groups.
- The Homeless Hub study reports that, “Seniors experience homelessness for a variety of reasons, including the lack of income to pay for housing (low government assistance, insufficient pensions, low wages and/or savings), the shortage of affordable and secure housing, deteriorating physical and mental health, a relationship breakdown and/or suffering from violence and abuse. The risk of homelessness for seniors can also be increased by the death of a spouse, social isolation, discrimination, or a lack of awareness of available benefits and services.” The coordinator’s personal outreach, knocking on closed doors and our Dandelion outreach team going into encampments are helping to connect people to resources, and to others who care.
- According to the Mental Health Commission of Canada, seniors will be the group that experiences the highest rate of mental illness in Canada by 2041. Many already face the double-stigma of experiencing mental illnesses coupled with being elderly. As the shelter population



Sylvia, 67, and Nathan, 72, have been experiencing homelessness for about 15 years in Victoria. The friendship and connection they receive from seniors’ hospital visits is truly invaluable.

ages, we need to be prepared to support seniors with depression, dementia, Alzheimer's, delusional disorders, and delirium, which are the most common mental illnesses amongst seniors in Canada.

- Participants will include people 55+ who are impoverished, unhoused, precariously housed, experiencing physical or mental health issues, and Indigenous and LGBTQ community members. The goal will be to provide otherwise unavailable opportunities for social inclusion, community engagement, and education about issues such as elder and financial abuse, as well as support from other participants and staff.
- Vulnerable seniors with low or no incomes do best in specialized programs such as the 55+ Club. Most seniors centres charge fees or have limited resources to assist those with complex needs.
- In the 2022 report, *Falling Further Behind*, the B.C.'s seniors advocate is called on the province to improve supports to those aged 65 to 74 after finding high levels of poverty. The report found one in four seniors lives on less than \$21,000 a year, and about half live on less than \$31,000 a year. That's less than minimum wage pays. "They are our lowest-income people and if they're renting they are in significant financial straights right now," added Mackenzie.
- Pensions – the main income source – haven't kept up with the rapid rise in rent. The advocate surveyed 10,000 seniors and found 84 per cent said they ran out of money to buy food often.



Your Philanthropic Opportunity

- The Our Place 55+ Club is unique in catering to the most marginalized seniors in the region. It provides social and recreational programming, educational events, peer mentorship, volunteer opportunities, outings, and ways to celebrate special days and traditions together.
- The Seniors Social Inclusion Support Worker is the key to this valuable program, providing personal support and referrals, and help navigating a variety of issues about aging, income, and health. Past participants in the Club have indicated much less depression and anxiety, loneliness, and frustration than other seniors within the Victoria community since the pandemic began.

- Your support would allow returning and new 55+ Club members to increase integration and overcome stigma they often experience. The 2023-24 project would involve selected educational sessions and speakers. The Seniors Inclusion staff member has developed a steering committee (made up of 6 seniors which meets once a month and decides what activities they would like to schedule). Surveys are completed by the rest of the 55+ Club to ensure their voices are also considered.
- The steering committee members mentor other 55+ Club members, help them with issues they are finding challenging. Many have become quite close friends and several now meet outside of Our Place Society 55+ Club dates; that is our ultimate goal, to promote a self-sustaining network of folks looking out for each other.



- Several seniors are wheelchair users and it is difficult to get them to outings unless through HandiTransit, or use of the OPS van, which would need a ramp and qualified driver to access.
- The seniors social support worker aims to offer 100 one-to-one sessions and hospital to help individuals with specific needs to link to resources. She will coach seniors to make calls to 2-1-1 and assist with following up on referrals to recommended resources.
- Over the year ahead, the dedicated staff lead on this program estimates she will offer dozens of engagement opportunities in leadership roles, as participants, or in a peer support role.
- The Club member survey requests include activities like exercise programs, such as chair volleyball, using exercise machines, organizing picnics, visiting local gardens, monthly



restaurant outings, meeting their MLA, history, art and maritime museum, IMAX movies, writing in the Intensive Journal group (Curtis, on the left in the photo below, is a regular participant), volunteering in the computer lab (Maree, on the right, is a regular), sharing MahJong and craft skills, and marking holidays together.

55+ Club Budget 2023-24

Item	Total Cost	Other Sources of Funding	How You Can Help
Accessible Transportation - bus/HandiTransit/taxis for 12 months x 4 outings/month x 20 people x \$5 average	\$4,800	\$2,000 (Our Place Transportation Fund)	\$2,800
Steering Committee Monthly Meetings - \$60 x 12 meetings, stationery and supplies, hot beverage and snacks	\$720		\$720
Community Outings - 4 outings/month x 12 months x \$200 average fees/cost	\$9,600		\$9,600
Individual Navigational Meetings with Seniors Inclusion Support Worker - refreshments	\$200		\$200
External Speaker Honoraria - 10 x \$60	\$600	\$600 (in kind from other agencies)	
Lunch Club Meals - 52 weeks x 20 people x \$10 average	\$10,400	\$2,400 pending federal grant	\$8,000
Seniors Social Inclusion Support Worker salary (28 hours) and MERCS (17%)	\$40,768 \$6,930	\$30,000 (donors)	\$17,698
Event Supplies (Christmas, Valentine's, Beauty Day, Handsome Day, Halloween, Mother's and Father's Day, Canada Day and birthdays) - 12 x \$100/month	\$1,200	\$1,200 (donors)	
Office Supplies - \$55/month x 12 months	\$600	\$600 (donors)	
Program office phone, laptop, office, pro-rated utilities and workshop space and accessible ramp - \$400 x 12 months	\$4,800	\$4,800 (donors)	
Total Expenses	\$80,618	\$41,600	\$39,018

This is the first year that the federal New Horizons for Seniors program has not provided a grant. Three private donor families have funded the core supports to date. You can enhance wellness and belonging through ensuring the continued offering of the Our Place Seniors 55+ Club, subsidizing core costs such as an increased coordinator's role, lunches, outings, leadership meetings, 1:1 and hospital visits. We always welcome gifts and supplies for their special days when it helps to not be alone, too.

More About Our Place

- Our Place Society's mission is to offer Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens a place to call their own, to live, share and grow together. Our Place has been building hope and belonging for more than 53 years by serving individuals with multiple barriers: people who are unhoused and impoverished, elders, and those experiencing mental, physical or substance misuse challenges.
- The demographics that Our Place serves include seniors, newcomers, visible minorities, women, LGBTQ2 people, Francophones, those who speak English as a second language, and Indigenous people, including First Nations, Inuit, and Metis.
- Our Place Society's downtown Community Centre serves 1200 hot meals and snacks per day. The Center also provides hot showers, hygiene products, clothing, counselling and outreach services, access to the computer lab, job readiness workshops, Indigenous programming, Vets for Pets, access to volunteer nurses for foot care and a doctor and spiritual care.
- Our Place Society also runs New Roads, a Therapeutic Recovery Community offering residential treatment to men who have substance use disorders, or mental health challenges and/or prior involvement in the criminal justice system. Several current residents are over 55 years old. Our Place also operates 7 other multiple transitional housing and shelter programs. Our Place now provides 470 shelter and housing beds for some of the city's most vulnerable individuals, one third of whom are fragile seniors. More information is at www.ourplacesociety.com
- Our Place Society CRA Registration # 827098344 RR0001
- Winner of the 2021 Non Profit of the Year award from the Greater Victoria Chamber of Commerce, awarded 4 stars from Charity Intelligence in 2022 and 2023.



Thank you for your kind consideration!

For further information, or to arrange a personal tour and visit with the Club members or coordinator, please contact:

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