



Our Place on Pandora Avenue. The society's fundraising efforts have been disrupted by the strike at Canada Post. DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

## Fate of 56,000 Our Place mail-outs in limbo due to Canada Post strike

MICHAEL JOHN LO  
Times Colonist

A critical part of Our Place Society's year-end fundraising campaign is in limbo because of the strike at Canada Post.

CEO Julian Daly warned of potential significant negative impacts to Our Place's operations due to the disruption of mail donations and fundraising efforts.

"Our neighbours who are suffering, seeking shelter, warmth, and nourishment, don't deserve the negative impact these delays could cause. But, without the ability to send or receive mail — we expect it could be significant," he said in a statement.

Janice Kalin, Our Place's director of philanthropy, said 56,000 mail-outs to current and former Our Place supporters and donors — which come with postage-paid return envelopes — are on hold in a Vancouver mailing house.

"We're nervous, because this is our biggest fundraising time of the year," she said. "It's a major push because this is when people

are getting their tax receipts and doing their year-end giving."

Our Place usually sends out four mail packages in the last six weeks of the year detailing the organization's accomplishments to the 14,000 people on their mailing list.

The organization usually raises about half of the \$5 million they receive from donations during the months of November and December, she said.

Donations accounted for about 25 per cent of the organization's total revenue last year.

Kalin said Victorians are unique in their appreciation of the value of print material, something that she hasn't encountered elsewhere in her years of working in the field in both U.S. and Canada.

"Our donors and supporters, they do love to sit with their coffee and read the *Times Colonist* and read their mail-outs," she said, adding that the organization saw a corresponding drop in donations when the mail-out frequency was reduced last year.

The first mail-out — which would have included a message

from Daly and a testimonial from Dennis, a veteran who was formerly homeless and now lives in a supportive housing site run by Our Place — was meant to be sent out on Friday. But 55,000 members of the Canadian Union of Postal Workers walked off the job at midnight after negotiations failed to come up with a deal.

Kalin said she "absolutely understands" the job action, noting that Our Place itself is a unionized workplace. "We very much support Canada Post workers and what's happening."

Negotiations between Canada Post and the union are expected to resume Monday.

In the meantime, Our Place is contacting donors by phone and email and encouraging online giving wherever possible, Kalin said.

Kalin said the organization has seen a 25 per cent increase in people accessing their services compared to last year.

Donations to Our Place can be made by phone at 250-940-5060 or online at [www.ourplacesociety.com/donate](http://www.ourplacesociety.com/donate).  
mjlo@timescolonist.com

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4

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Protesters on Admirals Road as they marched through Esquimalt to the offices of military contractor Lockheed Martin. DARREN STONE, TC

## Protesters march to offices of Lockheed Martin in Esquimalt over arms exports to Israel

MICHAEL JOHN LO  
Times Colonist

Protesters marched from the Johnson Street Bridge to Lockheed Martin's administrative offices in Esquimalt on Saturday morning calling for a stop to Canadian arms exports to Israel amid the war in Gaza.

At 11 a.m., around 100 people, many carrying Palestinian flags, arrived at the Lockheed Martin administrative offices near CFB Esquimalt after making their way down Esquimalt Road with a police escort.

Protest organizer Tara Ehrcke said the protest was one of 15 coordinated demonstrations across Canada on Saturday calling for an arms embargo on Israel over its war in Gaza.

"It's becoming increasingly clear that there are potential war crimes going on. The indiscriminate killing of women and children continues to take place and that we shouldn't be complicit with that," she said.

Israel's 13-month war in Gaza has killed more than 43,000 Pal-

estinians, mostly women and children, according to Gaza health officials who do not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

The war began after Palestinian militants stormed into Israel from Gaza on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 250 others.

Weekly protests calling for an end to the war in Gaza and for Canada to end its arms sales to Israel have occurred in downtown Victoria and at the B.C. legislature lawn for the past year.

While the federal government has suspended a small number of weapon export permits with Israel following pressure from the federal New Democratic Party — a change in policy which Ehrcke attributed partly to ongoing pro-Palestinian demonstrations across the country — there are still numerous existing permits and a "loophole" through U.S.-Canada trade that is allowing for Canadian-made weapons and military parts to reach Israel, she said.

— with a file from the Associated Press  
mjlo@timescolonist.com

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