



# Together, we can move mountains.

When the weather turns bleak, and the air is frigid, we often dwell on the challenges and hurdles in our path. But at this time of year, I also like to remind myself of the blessings that make the work we do in helping others possible.

I am grateful that over the last few months, Our Place and our partners (Island Health, BC Housing, Ministry of Housing, City of Victoria, VicPD, fellow not-for-profits) have worked so diligently to move people off Pandora and indoors. Without this continuing effort, at least 60 people wouldn't have had a warm, dry and safe bed to spend the night this winter.

We said earlier in the year that we would find, by the end of December, a pathway off Pandora for those living rough on the 900 block of Pandora Avenue. To help people there get on a pathway to a better, safer and healthier life. Many said that was overly ambitious but, working with partners, it looks like we will achieve that goal which is a wonderful thing.

Yes, there is still work to be done and challenges to overcome, but that shouldn't take away from the success

that partners working together have been able to accomplish.

I am grateful for our donors, big and small, as every dollar means another hot meal is served, a warm shower is offered, clothing is provided, and just as importantly, care and compassion are shown.

This year might be one of our most challenging yet as so many of our donations arrive via mail and we have a mail strike. This is very worrying for us as the lion's share of the donations to help those we serve come in during December. We are getting the word out to our donors about the ease of our online donation portal ([ourplacesociety.com/donate](http://ourplacesociety.com/donate)) and in-person donations at 1027 Pandora (9 to 5 weekdays) and 919 Pandora (24/7).

I am grateful for our non-financial donors, too. At this time of year, we often get school groups, families, and faith groups gathering up warm clothing, socks, underwear, boots, and more to donate to those who have so little that every change in weather is another obstacle to survival.

I am grateful to the Our Place clients or family members as we prefer to call them who remind us every day what our mission truly is. Yes, we see despair and heartbreak, but we also get the opportunity to make someone smile as they savour a hot meal made with love from our kitchen. We get to talk to people about their lives, to help them with their struggles, and for moments in time, allow them to forget their pain.

And I am especially grateful for the Our Place staff who consistently go above and beyond to make a difference in people's lives. This is not an ordinary job. Our frontline workers arrive each morning armed with compassion and a determination to help.

You see that care in every department. From the way our Facilities team keeps our buildings so clean to how our Community Centre workers greet every person as they enter the building; from how our Housing and Shelter workers make every resident feel valued to how our Kitchen crew create a varied and healthy menu seven days a week; from our fundraising team who make

our donors know how much they're appreciated, to our financial team who keep us all on track and able to best serve the most vulnerable; from how our department managers support and champion their staff, to how our directors balance tight budgets with one eye on the present and the other in the wouldn't-it-be-lovely-if future.

It truly is remarkable.

This year, I am also especially thankful for the hard work that has gone into our new long-term therapeutic recovery treatment program for women facing the challenges of addiction. It will be quite the Christmas present when we open our doors to this first-of-its-kind facility on Vancouver Island. And that is something that not only couldn't have happened without all the people mentioned above, but is a blessing to the whole community.

Alone, we are powerless; together, we can move mountains.

Julian Daly  
CEO, Our Place Society



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



# No one left alone

For Veronica Osborn, service is a way of life.

After a rewarding 37-year career with BC's provincial government and leadership of a long-term care hospital foundation, she chose to continue to serve the community through volunteer work.

"I've always been very intentional about the causes and organizations I support," says Veronica.

Supporting since 2014, Veronica has volunteered in many different roles at Our Place including teaching resume writing, serving meals, answering the phones, and sometimes just being available for a chat over coffee. Her consistency means she has built strong relationships with Our Place Family Members, many of whom she remains close with today.

As she continued to work with the organization and saw the incredible commitment to each and every individual that comes through our doors, Veronica thought to herself "where and how can I be of greatest service?"

It was in posing this question that she became aware of just how committed Our Place is to the people we serve. Veronica was approached by the coordinator of Our Place's 55+ program, Salome Waters, to discuss putting her experience serving the needs of a long-term care hospital to use.

Seniors are a particularly vulnerable group, and one of the fastest growing groups we serve as more and more seniors on fixed incomes are pushed out of affordable living. And for those without stable support systems, it is easy to slip through the cracks and languish in isolation.

"These people have worked all their lives, raised families and kept homes, and now can't afford to eat and remain healthy," says Veronica.

Thanks to the strong relationships Our Place has

built in the community, Salome is quickly informed when an Our Place Family Member is admitted to a hospital or long-term care facility and no longer able to attend 55+ group meetings.

**But, they are not left alone** – visitation is set up to continue to support them. Veronica, Salome, and other members of the team visit Family Members every week, often to bring a small comforting gift like a favourite treat or sometimes just to chat. For those facing end-of-life, even just having a hand to hold provides the dignity and emotional support so dearly needed.

"We are usually their only visitor," says Salome.

"He likes a ham and cheese sandwich, on white bread. She likes grapes," Veronica says of one couple she visits weekly, who choose to remain anonymous. Husband and wife have recently been separated to different facilities and at this time, Veronica is their only visitor.

With a medical system already stretched very thin, it can be easy for a person to be pushed aside if they aren't experiencing an emergency. In these conditions, seniors can deteriorate quickly.

And it's not just seniors who receive visitation. The overwhelming majority of people seeking help from Our Place come through our doors due to chronic physical and mental conditions, and a lack of support. Whether they are in hospital for an extended period of care, or facing end-of-life, **no one deserves to be alone.**

This holiday season, Veronica, Salome, and other team members will be making special visits to Family Members in care to bring them some holiday cheer. You can provide for them, and every person living in Our Place shelters and housing facilities this year with a gift today.

**Please give generously and help ensure we can meet the needs of every person in our shared community.**

To donate to Our Place Society, please visit us at [ourplacesociety.com/donate](https://ourplacesociety.com/donate)



# Going beyond the plate

Our Place Society is probably best known for providing much-needed food to those experiencing poverty and homelessness in our city.

Their good reputation for keeping people fed is well-deserved - over 1,400 meals are prepared every day out of their downtown community centre, and hundreds more in their shelters and housing facilities. These meals are a lifeline for thousands of people and a first step towards a better future.

But, meals are just one pillar of the work that Our Place accomplishes for our region. When a person comes to Our Place, they're approached by an outreach worker for assessment.

"Assessment means we can better understand exactly what supports are suited to each individual. For some that can simply be a bed out of the rain while they catch their breath and make a plan. For others, it's more complex: health needs, psychiatric support, medication renewals, dental care, supportive housing, detox, therapeutic recovery options, or even in some cases hospice," says Julian Daly, CEO.

Many of these options are provided in-house as Our Place operates 6 housing and shelter facilities in addition to the 54 transitional shelter beds available at their community centre. In addition to housing, they also operate New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community for men recovering from addiction (soon to introduce a separate women's program this winter).

The community centre has a hygiene area with hot showers, toiletries, and clean towels. And special services regularly including haircuts and foot care.



Professional volunteers visit the community centre, making it an oasis for anyone struggling to access medical appointments, tax clinics, veterinary services, and much more.

In an emergency, Our Place paramedics are on-site all day. They treat wounds, reverse overdoses when possible, and act as first responders to the often-unpredictable symptoms of medical and psychological conditions that Our Place Family Members experience. With an astounding 90% of people living on our streets responding to a poll that they suffer from such a condition, the association between illness and poverty is clear and further treatment is usually needed.

If something can't be provided on site, such as clinical counselling, detox, or hospice care, Our Place outreach workers can provide referrals, warm meals, and a hand to hold until that help is possible.

And sometimes, it's that hand reaching out that means the most.

Because beyond the plate at Our Place, they're providing those things that we all need, and sometimes take for granted.

Health.  
Hope.  
Belonging.  
Community.  
Safety.

It's not fair that there are hundreds of people in our own community that are desperately seeking these things. But, when you choose to support Our Place, you make them possible.

And you're not just filling thousands of empty plates every day. You're also contributing towards sustainable and long-term solutions out of poverty and homelessness. For good.



To donate to Our Place Society, please visit us at [ourplacesociety.com/donate](https://ourplacesociety.com/donate)



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