

A Miracle or Two on Pandora Avenue

By Julian Daly, Our Place CEO

At this time of year, it's easy to feel the weight of the winter. The days are darker, the weather is colder, and many people in our region continue to struggle just to get through another day.

And yet, when I look back on this past year, what rises to the surface isn't hardship—it's gratitude. Gratitude for the donors, government partners, staff, and especially our community of volunteers and neighbours who have stepped up again and again to lift people up. Your compassion shows that when a community comes together, even the most difficult realities begin to shift.

A major milestone was completed in March with the opening of the Women's Program

at our New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community. Thanks to generous supporters, we transformed one wing of our View Royal campus into an independent, 20-room long-term recovery community—the first of its kind for women on Vancouver Island. Since 2018, when we opened the men's program, our dream has been to provide women with the same safe, healing space. This year, that dream became reality, and the early signs of transformation are already profound.

And the Our Place Pathway of Support continues to grow. In 2026, we will open a tranquil healing garden and a sober second-stage home where women can live with their children after graduating from New Roads—a supported next step toward stability and independence.

We've also made important improvements to our downtown Community Centre on Pandora Avenue. More people than ever are coming to us for basic needs: a hot meal, a cup of coffee, dry clothing, a safe place to rest, or simply a conversation. To better meet those needs, we renovated our entrance to welcome people more intentionally, connect them quickly with supports, and create a calmer, more accessible space.

Some people come seeking a moment of respite. Others are ready for the next step—finding a shelter mat, applying for detox or housing, or accessing medical care. Whatever brings them to our door, our goal is the same: to make the Community Centre a sanctuary and the first step on a journey toward hope and transformation.



We have also expanded the supports available at the very first steps of the housing pathway. This winter, thanks to partnerships with BC Housing and Broadview United Church, we increased Emergency Weather Response shelter spaces—ensuring more people have a warm, safe place to go when the temperatures drop. It is another example of what becomes possible when our community comes together with urgency and compassion.

Looking ahead to 2026, we will continue to deepen and broaden the Pathway of Support with expanded programs, refreshed spaces, and stronger connections from meals to housing, recovery, and employment.

None of this is possible without a community that cares so deeply. Just last week, a small group of

volunteers spent the morning sorting donated clothing so people could find what they need with dignity. Moments like this remind me how much your time, your kindness, and your gifts matter.

Thank you for stepping up this year. As the need continues to grow, we ask you to keep walking beside us—supporting this work, strengthening our services, and helping us expand the Pathway of Support so more people in Greater Victoria can find safety, connection, healing, and hope.

This past year hasn't been simple, and the road ahead won't always be easy, but there has also been room for a miracle or two.

And that is a blessing.

Julian Daly,
Our Place CEO



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This holiday, add the people at Our Place to your holiday traditions.

When you choose a gift to Our Place, you'll be making the holiday truly special for someone in our city. And with every gift from their *12 Days of Giving Catalogue*, you'll receive a free print or digital certificate that describes what your gift is making possible. Share it with a loved one for a meaningful holiday present or display it yourself as a reminder of the hope you've given this year.

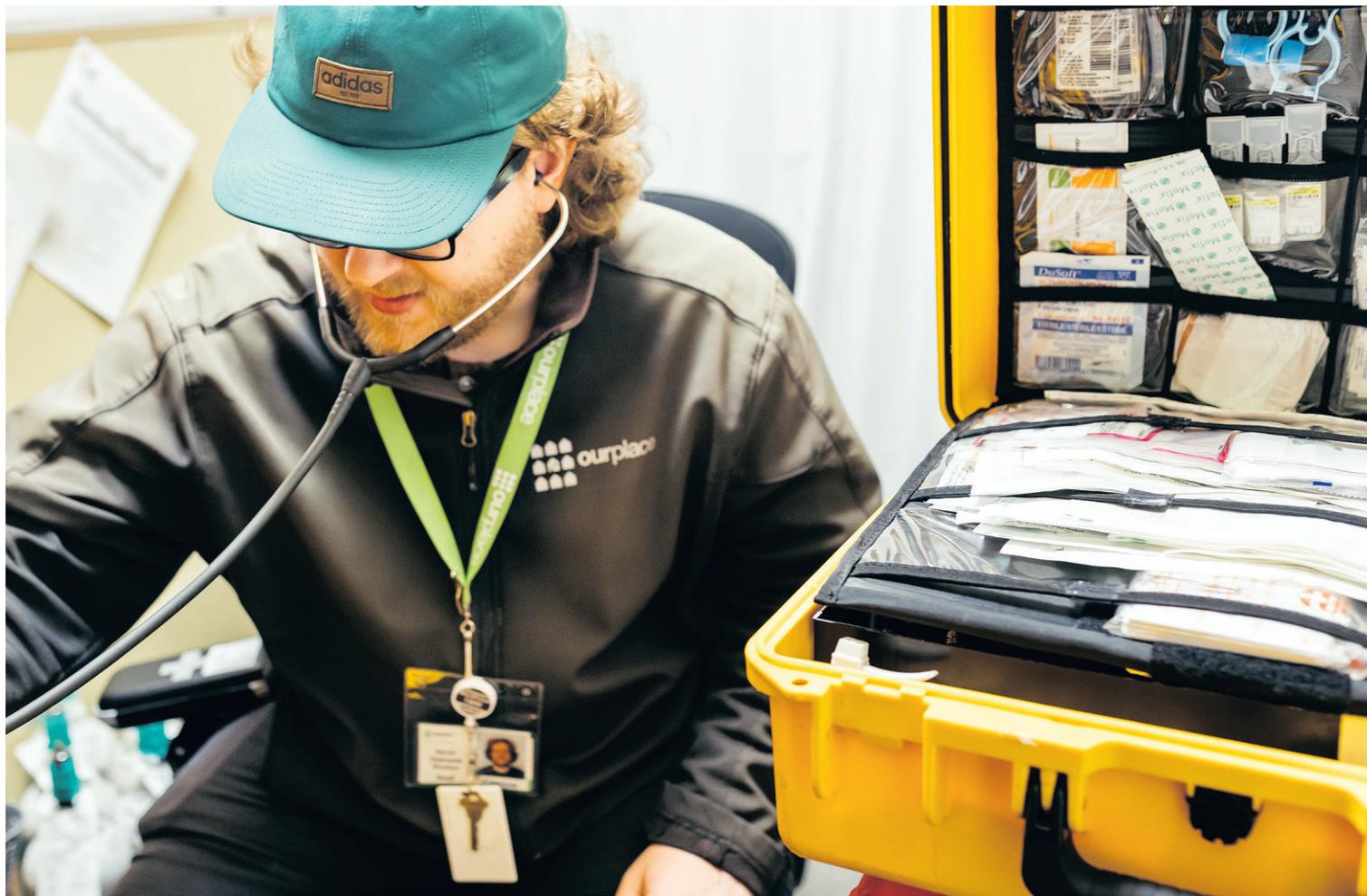
Here is just one of the items available!

A Hot Meal for \$5

A hot, nourishing meal can be the difference between a good day and an impossible one. This gift provides someone who is hungry and hurting with the nutrition they need—and the simple dignity of sharing a meal with others in a warm, safe place. That nourishment becomes one of the first building blocks of stability, helping them regain the energy to rebuild their lives.

Our Place's Holiday Meals are happening this week. Donate today to make sure there is enough turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy and pumpkin pie for everyone to feel the holiday cheer!





Tim's Story: Paramedic Emergency Gear

Tim, an Our Place Family Member, regularly visits the community centre for meals and hot showers, and to meet with friends. However, on one memorable occasion, he needed more help than he realized.

responded. "He came to my assistance, and I was lying down on the floor, could not move. I had no energy to get up," Tim remembers. "He checked all my vitals and knew right away that it was time for me to go to the hospital."

"I didn't know what was going on," Tim recalls. "My body temperature was just ... I could not get warm. I tried a hot shower and turned the heat all the way up. My body was just not getting warm."

For Tim, having trusted medical professionals right there in the community centre made all the difference. "I'm just grateful for everything these guys do ... Without them down here, this would be a very sad place to live. Necessity is an understatement."

After the shower, Tim made his way upstairs to the main floor of the community centre, where he collapsed. "I just yelled out for help - someone get the paramedics - because I know they're around here. I'm always seeing them help somebody."

And Tim isn't alone in this experience. The paramedics at Our Place treat more people each day than others in the field, support chronic illness management, and ease the burden on our already challenged medical system.

What Tim didn't realize was how critically ill he was. "I just didn't realize how rough shape I was in. I almost lost my life. I went septic."

Did you know you can give the gift of paramedic emergency gear to Our Place as a holiday gift? Visit ourplacesociety.com/donate to give today.

Gavin, one of Our Place's on-site paramedics, immediately

Paramedical Care



PATHWAY OF SUPPORT



Register now at cnoy.org/victoriapandora

Coldest Night of the Year 2026

On Saturday, February 28, 2026, Coldest Night of the Year walkers will take to the streets of downtown Victoria. We will walk in solidarity, raising funds and support for those who are struggling with hurt, hunger, and homelessness in our community.

Our goal for this year is \$140,000, and with your help, we will reach it!

Over the coming months, Our Place will continue to expand its shelter and recovery programs while also facing a substantial increase in food costs and a rise in demand for community meals. Funds raised through Coldest Night of the Year Victoria Pandora will be instrumental in helping meet these growing needs and will ensure that individuals continue to receive essential supports.



THANK YOU TO OUR COLDEST NIGHT SPONSORS!



Sponsor a Meal at Our Place

Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner, Hot chocolate and Cookie stands are available!

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