

50+ Years of Service



WELCOME

Our Place Society



MESSAGE

Chief Executive Officer
and Board Chair

OUR PLACE — YEAR OF TRANSFORMATION

This last year has truly been one of transformation for Our Place.

We continue to improve our services at 919 Pandora through extended hours, staff training, and increased food donations (especially fresh vegetables direct from local farms, which increases the nutritional value of the meals served). Plus, we are laying fresh groundwork for lifting people out of poverty and addiction.

Our Next Steps to Employment program is designed to help vulnerable people return to work, and it reached an incredible milestone this year with 100 people completing the first workshops. (See Alex's story on Page 7 for one example.)

We also focused on making sure residents in our transitional housing programs, whether at 919, My Place, or the First Met shelter, are not left behind. To that end, our staff worked diligently to place residents in the most appropriate, permanent home. Last year, staff made over 600 housing referrals on behalf of the people we serve. (See Blanche's story on Page 9 for one example.)

The opening of New Roads, our Therapeutic Recovery Community in View Royal, was the most significant milestone of the year. This program, based on a successful model from Europe, is comprised of four stages over two years. What makes our model so unique is the focus on helping the population we see every day at Our Place, persons experiencing homelessness and suffering from addiction, plus having high interaction with the criminal justice system.

We believe this program will demonstrate that those who are often abandoned by society are valuable members of our community, and their worth will shine through once given this opportunity.

At present, there are 13 individuals in the first phases of the program, and we are building toward a community of 50. We are also learning a lot in these early stages and are confident this program will demonstrate a path forward, not only for Our Place, but for our province and our country.

Hope begins by planting these seeds, and with your help we plan to grow a full garden. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

With much gratitude,

Don Evans
Chief Executive Officer

Ernie Quantz
Board Chair



FAMILY

Hope and Belonging



VISION AND MISSION



VISION

Nourishment, hope and belonging
for all in Greater Victoria.



MISSION

We offer our most vulnerable citizens
a place to call their own, where we
live, share and grow together.



PROGRAMS and SERVICES

Your invaluable
donations have
helped us provide

60+

Programs
& Services

PROGRAMS

Education:

Our Place partners with community groups and volunteers providing a vast array of opportunities to enrich intellect, develop personal insight, unleash creativity and learn practical skills. Programs such as: Next Steps to Employment, Art Therapy, Library, Choir, Computer Training, Gardening, Story Collective, Job Skills, Literacy, Knitting, Financial Planning, Math & English Classes, Bike Maintenance, and more.

Health:

Our Place believes in bringing as many services as we can directly to the people we serve. To that end, our Medical Room invites nurses, doctors and paramedics directly into the Drop-In Centre. Other health services provided include: Therapeutic Recovery Community, Acupuncture, Acupressure, Chiropractic, Craniosacral Therapy, Massage, Therapy Dog, Dental Hygiene, First Aid, Foot Care, Hearing Clinics, Eye Care, Mental Health and Addiction Counselling, Reiki, Reflexology, Vets for Pets, and much more.

SERVICES

Drop-In Centre:

Serving between 600 to 800 people per day, the Drop-In Centre is a sanctuary and community gathering place. Nutrition Bar, staffed by friendly volunteers, is open between scheduled hot meals, serving coffee, tea and snacks. Our Message Centre allows over 400 people with no fixed address to receive mail and phone messages. Other services include access to computers, clothing, games, library, and more.

Outreach:

Our Place Outreach Workers meet people where they are at, building trust with a vulnerable population that often is at odds with mainstream society. The team provides Advocacy, Financial Crisis Support, Field Trips, Hope Fund, Interventions, Sports, Hair Cuts, Showers, Legal Services, Overdose Prevention, Income Tax, Counselling, Aboriginal Housing Advocacy, Referrals to Employment, Housing, Government Agencies, Medical, Detox & Treatment.

Meals:

We serve over 1,100 nutritious meals and 1,200 snacks daily. In 2018/2019, we served over 890,000 meals and snacks through the Nutrition Bar and Dining Room.

Employment:

Next Steps to Employment opened its office at Quadra and Balmoral in July 2018.

422,862
meals served
+
467,600
snacks served

100

People have gone through the first stages of the Next Steps To Employment program

NEXT STEPS TO EMPLOYMENT

Alex was at a loss.. Another job had fallen by the wayside and he was unemployed once again.

With the high cost of rent taking all his savings, Alex was accessing Our Place for meals, programs and socializing with friends.

"I was getting fired a lot," the Victoria native admits. "That was discouraging."

But the reason for the firings was complex. At 33, Alex has been dealing with schizophrenia and severe anxiety for most of his life, plus the strong medication he's on affects his memory.

"He was very confused on his medications," says Ashley, job coach at Our Place's Next Steps To Employment program. "Which made it very difficult for him to keep to a schedule."

While a lot of people might give up and become a ward of the welfare system, Alex was determined to work.

"I like to work," he says with a shy smile, his eyes darting up from his lap for the briefest of moments. "It keeps me distracted. Keeps my depression away."

Having talked to an Outreach worker on the Our Place Drop-In floor, Alex was referred to Next Steps To Employment. Despite his anxiety, Alex gathered the

courage to give it a try.

"He was motivated to succeed," says Ashley. "Plus we empowered him enough to talk with his doctor and get the dosage of his prescription drugs lowered. It's made a huge difference."

Upon graduating the program, Alex landed a job as a dishwasher at St. Michael's University School.

"They love him there," Ashley adds.

The Next Steps To Employment program



is unique in that once a graduate is employed, the program continues to work with both the client and the employer to work through any hurdles that may come up.

Now that he's working a steady job again, Alex is working with Ashley to acquire new I.D. and a bank account so he can have direct deposit of his paycheques (and avoid the fees at cheque-cashing outlets.)

Without the financial worry of unemployment, Alex is also working on healthier ways to deal with his diabetes and social anxiety.

HOUSING and SHELTER

61
people were
transitioned
into their
permanent
homes

HOUSING

The bustle of conversation and meals on the first three floors of our building on Pandora usually steals the attention of volunteers and visitors. But the top three floors house 45 units of quiet sanctuary for those who are pulling their lives back together.

These 45 private rooms are designed and fully equipped to help each resident feel at home in a supportive and caring environment. Two of these units are dedicated to short term housing for people who are waiting for a spot in a detox or treatment program. The other 43 rooms are for those who are committed to moving toward independent living.

Each resident works in consultation with an Our Place Society support worker and a mental health and addictions clinician. Together they develop a plan to overcome the disabilities and challenges that stand between the resident and his or her dream of living a full, rich and independent life.

SHELTER

In response to the increasing homelessness crisis, Our Place continued to operate an overnight shelter in the gymnasium at First Metropolitan United Church, plus a 24/7 transitional home called My Place in the former Boys & Girls Club.

Our Place operated a 50-bed Extreme Weather Response shelter in downtown Victoria, plus opened an Extreme Weather Response shelter in Sooke for the first time.





Looking around
her brand new
apartment,
Blanche
can hardly
believe her luck

Blanche's Story

Special moments never used to mean anything to Blanche. Memorable days just didn't exist for a woman whose daily drive was focused on pure survival.

"When I found myself out on the streets, I lost hope," she says. "When you lose hope, then everything else goes with it."

But this year is decidedly different. This year, Blanche has a lot of moments to celebrate.

A petite woman with a big smile that has only grown brighter over the last few months, Blanche is celebrating one year of sobriety thanks to the connections she has made at Our Place.

"When I walked into Our Place, the transition started right there," she says. "Kelsey (Blanche's housing support worker) made me feel like I matter. She was so easy to talk to and that helped rebuild my self-esteem."

Getting sober and staying sober is a difficult task when you're living on the street, explains Blanche. "You are in a cloud of depression. Not really knowing how you got there or how to get out of it."

The 53-year-old, divorced mother of three lost control of her life when an abusive relationship came to a violent conclusion. After witnessing their mother being beaten

and abused, the children moved in with their biological father.

Alone, Blanche fell into depression and began hanging out with friends who drank in groups on the street.

Thinking she could help, she would invite her friends to stay at her place, but that quickly escalated into the loss of her own housing.

"I was on the streets for years," she says. "Rain, snow, didn't matter."

A new boyfriend introduced her to crack cocaine and her addiction grew out of control. Her only place of refuge was Our Place where she went for meals and just to be somewhere she felt safe.

Eventually, she applied for transitional housing knowing that Our Place didn't allow guests in the rooms and that she would be able to access important services such as detox.

"I went to treatment for the first time," she says with a smile. "And I'm taking a computer course offered by Camosun College here at Our Place."

Sobriety and stable housing brought a new light into Blanche's life.

For the first time, she attended her daughter's graduation. It wasn't for high school, however, but university. The proud mom beams. Her daughter is now studying for her Master's degree.

Blanche also began volunteering at the Nutrition Bar on Our Place's busy Drop-In floor.

"I want to give back to the people who helped me," she says.

With her life getting back on track, Blanche received even more good news: her application for permanent housing was approved recently.

Looking around her brand new, one-bedroom apartment, Blanche can hardly believe her luck.

"It's huge. It has a huge bedroom, a huge living room, my own patio. It's gorgeous. I'm not dreaming anymore. This is reality."

And this time, Blanche won't be journeying alone.

Accompanied by newfound knowledge and skills needed to make healthier choices for the future, Blanche will also have the continued support of Our Place's Aboriginal Support Worker.

"I am determined now," she says. "I have hope again."

VOLUNTEERS

WE COULDN'T DO IT
WITHOUT THEM



DONORS

MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Our Place exists today because a group of forward-thinking, community-minded, generous people came together to create a unique sanctuary for people in need in Victoria. More than 50 years later, we're still able to offer hope and belonging to our most vulnerable citizens and still indebted to our thoughtful, caring donors and volunteers. It's a relationship we'll never take for granted and one we celebrate every day. Because every day, their gifts make a difference.

Our deepest appreciation is extended on behalf of the thousands of people who benefit from our programs via financial donations and in-kind gifts of food, clothing and toiletries. We are also grateful for thoughtful Legacy of Love donors who have included a gift in their will to Our Place, thereby extending our valuable services for people in need, well into the future.

Highlights of 2018/19 Philanthropic Gifts

New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community

New Roads opened its doors in October 2018 thanks to \$2.4M from 28 founding major contributors, including three Foundations, the United Church of Canada and inspiring local philanthropists, building on the generous support from the BC Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and Island Health.

It Takes a Village

- In 2018-19, Our Place Society received over 10,947 unique donations, from a total of 7,853 caring individuals and businesses.
- 1,119 committed donors have joined our 'Circle of Love' monthly donor program that provides stable cash flow for over 1,200 daily meals, volunteer coordination, Next Steps to Employment and more than 60 programs serving people in need.

Out Of The Cold Campaign

- Our Place Society reached out to our donors for extra resources to fund extended winter hours especially during the snowy cold snap we experienced last winter. In 2018-19, our donors provided six months of extended

hours through gifts totaling \$180,000 to keep our downtown drop-in centre open from 6:30 a.m. until 9:00 p.m.

- Thanks to 363 walkers and two sponsors, the downtown Coldest Night of the Year event raised \$56,000 on February 23 for extended hours, too.

Hungry Hearts

- Proceeds from sponsorships, auction item sales and ticket purchases by 286 gala guests resulted in \$150,000 for the extended hours campaign.
- More than 50 businesses donated products and the Delta Ocean Pointe provided the venue for an evening featuring eight chefs, with Chef Nicolas Hipperson of the Union Club winning the coveted Top Chef Trophy this year for his popular seafood offering.

Sponsored Meals

140 community groups, churches, businesses and families stepped forward to sponsor meals, providing quality ingredients and welcoming smiles for hungry people who depend on our dining hall for their daily nutritional needs.

OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE

We talk about hope a lot at Our Place because so many of the people whom we serve have lost all trace of it.

So when we look to the future, we want it to contain pieces of that hope alongside fragments of joy, and maybe even a slice or two of happiness.

Some of the biggest smiles and tears of joy that we witness come when people who have been living on the streets or in shelters finally get a place to call their own. Imagine having a bed where the only sound of snoring is from either yourself, a loved one, or a new family pet, rather than strangers on the mat beside you.

So while we will continue to build upon and improve all the programs and services we offer today, we also want to see what we can do about housing.

To that end, we are aiming to get 200 people off the street and into homes over the next three years.

We plan to accomplish this through a variety of ways that we have been exploring around the Greater Victoria area.

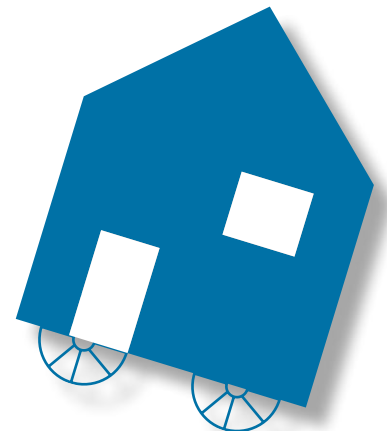
Imagine having a bed where the only sound of snoring is from either yourself, a loved one, or a new family pet, rather than strangers on the shelter mat beside you.

Through a partnership with Leadership Victoria, we have identified several parcels of land that we believe would be perfect

for temporary modular housing.

The government has already set aside funding for some of these units, but they need someone to step in and take up the charge.

With our proven track record, plus strong government and community partners, we are excited to see how this will unfold.



50+ YEARS OF SERVICE

1967

The Upper Room Society is founded

1986

The Open Door is founded

2005

The Open Door and The Upper Room form an alliance to create Our Place Society

2006

Our Place Society moved to Johnson Street for an interim period while demolition and new construction takes place

2007

New Our Place building at 919 Pandora Avenue is completed with three floors of transitional housing. Demolition of Upper Room begins in order to create outdoor courtyard

2008

Our Place building is fully completed with three floors of programs and services, plus housing and courtyard

2012

Our Place expands its hours to seven days per week

2014

Royalty visits as Her Royal Highness The Countess of Wessex tours Our Place and helps serve lunch. Our Place expands its winter hours until 9pm every night

2015

Our Place opens a new overnight shelter at First Met United Church to provide sleeping for up to 40 vulnerable people

2016

Our Place opens My Place, a transitional shelter on Yates Street, and Choices, a transitional shelter in View Royal, in response to tent city. Expands First Met shelter to 60 mats

2017

Our Place opens a temporary Overdose Prevention Site in response to opioid crisis

2018

Our Place transforms a former youth custody centre in View Royal into a new Therapeutic Recovery Community. Our Place opens its Next Steps to Employment program

2019

Our Place opens a unique storage facility in its courtyard for people experiencing homelessness. Our Place renovates its Therapeutic Recovery Community, and unveils a new Healing Garden

BY THE NUMBERS

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Our Place provides
a safe sanctuary
every day of the year

40,520
volunteer
hours

14,508
hot showers
in Our Place
hygiene

422,862
meals served

467,600
snacks served

+

1995
one-on-one sessions
with outreach workers

613
housing
referrals

1516
crisis
interventions
by trained staff

72
detox and
treatment
referrals

372
employment
referrals

127
legal
referrals

631
client
advocacy

228
foot baths

968
medical
referrals

322
financial
support
grants

375
haircuts





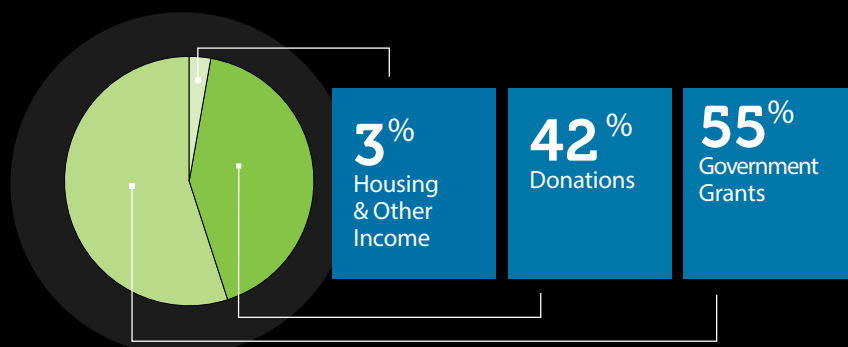
FINANCES

April 2018 - March 2019

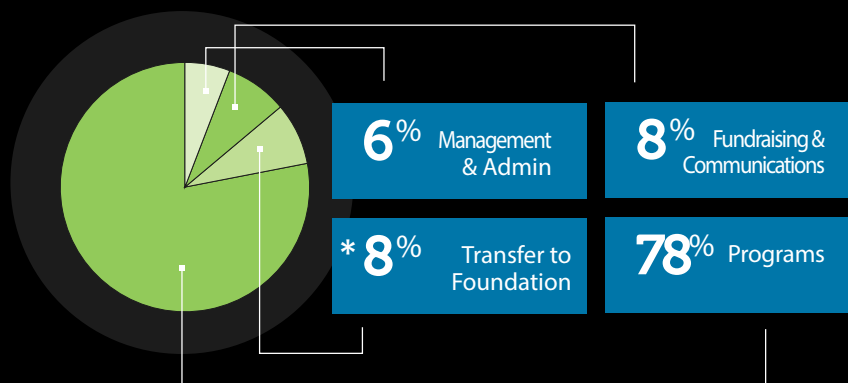
Thank you to the thousands of supporters who joined us in helping Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens.

Here's the breakdown of how we carefully used donor dollars to support our mission:

Revenue
\$10,308,843



Expenses
\$10,285,311



Operating Income

\$23,532

* Represents the transfer of \$837,500 received from estate gifts to the newly-created Our Place Foundation. Estate gifts held in our Foundation will provide a sustainable source of income for Our Place Society in future years.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Ernie Quantz, Chair
Ansley Tucker, Vice Chair
Andrea Jakeman-Brown, Treasurer
Lauree Austin, Secretary
Diana Butler, Past Chair

DIRECTORS:

Susan Abells	Cairine MacDonald
Lori Beaulieu	Allan Saunders
Margo Goodhand	Patricia Walker
Brett Hayward	

LEADERSHIP

Don Evans, Chief Executive Officer
Linda McLean, Chief Operating Officer
Alf Eamer, Director of Finance
Grant McKenzie, Director of Communications
Marg Rose, Director of Philanthropy
Holt Sivak, Director of Programs & Services
Dana Young, Director of Therapeutic Community

OUR VALUES

Unconditional Love – We are an organization with Christian values and principles. We believe that everyone should experience unconditional love in a non-judgmental way.

Hope – We are founded on the belief that each individual who comes through our doors will find inspiration, support and comfort. We believe in the potential of all and provide opportunities for positive change. We advocate for social justice.

Teamwork – We value the contributions of our staff and volunteers, and ensure they are well trained and supported. We work together as one team committed to our mission, vision and values.

Belonging – We strive to create a nurturing atmosphere of home and family, where all are welcome and can experience a sense of hope and belonging. We are inclusive. Our doors are open to those of all cultures and beliefs.

Safety – We believe all who enter Our Place should feel secure and free from harassment or mistreatment of any kind. We endeavour to create a safe atmosphere where everyone can experience a sense of well-being.

OUR PLACE SOCIETY

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Ian Batey	Mike Shannon
Pete Jando	
Greg Conner	



ourplace

Hope and Belonging