

Our Place Progress Growth Opportunity

Our Place Society
919 Pandora Avenue
Victoria, B.C. V8V 3P4
250-388-7112
ourplacesociety.com
admin@ourplacesociety.com

At Our Place, we serve our family with love and respect. We work for social justice for Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens.



Join the conversation online!

facebook facebook.com/ourplacesociety

twitter twitter.com/ourplacesociety





Message from our Executive Director and Board Chair

During the past year, we have been excited about the many positive changes taking place at Our Place. We increased our programs and services, while our staff whole-heartedly focused on our mission to provide a sense of hope and belonging to Greater Victoria's most vulnerable citizens.

We have expanded our hours and services at Our Place, and are now open for lunch on weekends and for drop-in services on Sunday afternoons. We have been able to open on statutory holidays and have launched a very popular Sponsor-A-Breakfast program. Our facility is being utilized more frequently, to better meet our family members' needs with a greater offering of programs and services – all a part of our longer-term goal of being open all day, every day.

The financial stability we achieved this past fiscal year has included eliminating the deficit and implementing innovative ways to cut costs and create efficiencies within the organization. By partnering in new ways, we have strengthened relationships with the faith community and established new relationships with the business community. We thank our employees and volunteers for their dedication and commitment in support of this ongoing process.

The board of directors completed a governance transition and restructured committees to better support the leadership of the organization. With this strong leadership, we look forward to building greater alliances with our community partners.

The collaborative effort and support of our dedicated employees, volunteers, community partners, supporters and stakeholders demonstrate what we can achieve when we work together towards a common goal. We will continue serving our most vulnerable fellow citizens with unconditional love and respect, free from judgment and criticism. Without the application of these values on the part of everyone who participates with the family at Our Place, many such citizens would not experience the heartfelt connections that every human being yearns for.

Warm regards,

Don Evans
Executive Director

Shannon Renault
Board Chair

Programs & Services

DROP-IN CENTRE

Coffee & Community, Computers, Clothing, Games, Library, Phone & Message Centre.

The Drop-In Centre and adjacent Courtyard are hospitable spaces where family members are welcomed, offered a listening ear, a cup of coffee and a place to relax. Outreach workers look for opportunities to connect people to programs, services and the support they need. People write resumes, apply for jobs and develop computer skills in the computer lab. The Phone and Message Centre helps people to stay connected with family or conduct a job search. More than 400 people with no fixed address benefit from receiving mail and phone messages they would otherwise not receive.

EDUCATION

"Art for me is very spiritual. It's a medium for working out and releasing the past. It calms my whole life," says family member Glen.

are respected. As art therapist Geri Nolan says, "The process isn't up to us. Each person is unique. There's no pressure or judgments here."

Art Group participant and Family member Glen Schulte says, "The history of how much people have helped to give us a place to go inspired me to create this drawing." Glen created a beautiful drawing of the former Upper Room building and financed the production of limited edition prints through presales.

"I come to the Drop-In to meet my friends. The staff are very helpful. If I'm feeling down there is always someone that puts a smile on my face," says family member Joe.



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



Our Vision Nourishment, hope and belonging for all in Greater Victoria.



EMPLOYMENT

Bagged Lunches, Bus Tickets, Clothing, Financial Planning, Job Referrals, Resume Preparation, Research, Work Boots.

From resume preparation to supplying clothing for job interviews, steel-toed work boots or a bagged lunch, Our Place offers support to family members seeking employment, and continues to advocate for them after they are employed if challenges arise. Volunteer and part-time work at Our Place gives members an opportunity to gain work experience and develop confidence. Family member, Roman Witkowski, came to Our Place for help years ago and gained experience through volunteering. Now he's employed as an outreach worker helping others achieve their employment goals by passing on job referrals from businesses, individuals and agencies, and by providing references.

Roman says, "After finding out that a family member was a whiz at reassembling old computers, I put in a good word to a local business owner who hired him. He gained experience, and then he opened his own shop fixing computers. We don't see him anymore because that's what happens once people find work. They want to live their new life, and leave the old one behind."

HEALTH

Acupuncture, Acupressure, Addiction as an Ally, Chiropractic, Dental Hygiene, First Aid, Foot Care, Hair Cuts, Life Ring, Narcotics Anonymous, Showers.

Staying healthy and clean while living on the street is hard at the best of times. Services such as 30-minute showers and holistic healthcare offer family members the opportunity to spend time caring for themselves and being cared for by skilled professionals and volunteers.

Fernwood hairstylist and volunteer Heather estimates that one thousand people use the haircutting service. "A quality hair cut boosts people's confidence and self-worth, especially so when someone has a job interview or is celebrating special occasions with visiting relatives. There's a huge need for it," says Heather.

John Banks, the leader of LifeRing, an abstinence-based recovery support group at Our Place, says, "People fill up their toolkit with what they learn at the meetings. Many people would be back on the street if this program wasn't here."

Gordon, a certified acupressure practitioner and family member, has offered more than 1,200 acupressure treatments at Our Place. He says, "It serves the whole community when one distraught person gets up from the table feeling calm."

MEALS

Breakfast, Lunch & Dinner, Bagged Lunches, BBQs, Birthdays, Holiday Feasts, Nutrition Bar.

Our Place serves more than 1,200 nourishing home-cooked breakfasts, lunches and dinners daily to people in need. Starting the day with a meal can make a huge difference

"Victoria is a very generous city. I'm proud of the diversity of Our Place supporters. Because of them we are able to offer the city's most reliable and consistent meal service for people in need. Almost half of the nutritious and often fresh, seasonal food served is donated from local farms, gardens, grocery stores and others", says Brian, Manager of Food Services.

in someone's life, especially for people who are homeless or who have no place to cook or store food. Through our new Sponsor-A-Breakfast program, family members are served a special breakfast several times a month paid for by local businesses, police officers, politicians or community groups. Those who come to help in the kitchen and serve breakfast, have been impressed by the gratitude and courtesy shown by family members.

"I'm so very grateful that I have a place to enjoy a meal and socialize without being rushed," says family member Faith.



OUTREACH

Advocacy, Emergency Food, Financial Crisis Support, Field Trips, Interventions, Sports, Tax Preparation/Filing, Referrals to Employment, Housing, Government Agencies, Legal, Medical, Detox and Treatment Services.

The catalyst for positive change in the life of a vulnerable citizen often begins with a conversation in the drop-in centre or at meal time with an outreach worker. Workers offer practical solutions in the spirit of unconditional love and acceptance. Family members develop trusting relationships at Our Place, inspiring them with the hope and confidence they need to succeed. Thousands of referrals are arranged by outreach workers to ensure family members' needs, arising from trauma, mental health, addictions, isolation and poverty, are addressed. As one family member relates, "The workers provide direction and open doors, but we still have to do the work."

"Kym, an outreach worker, got me into detox and then a stabilization program. She's there when I need her without having to put my name on a waiting list. Just a brief chat with her can stop my 'stinkin' thinking' and gets me back on track," says Stu, a long-time family member who is celebrating two years of sobriety.

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 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.

PET CARE

Vets for Pets, Pet Food Bank.

For many people living on the streets, a pet is the only family they have and can provide much-needed safety. The Vets for Pets clinic offers pet care services at Our Place with the help of local veterinarians and student practitioners. Each pet receives a check-up and professional advice about keeping their pet healthy and cared for. Pet owners can also access the Pet Food Bank, operated in partnership with The Sooke Animal Food and Rescue Society. SAFR organizer, Kai Yates, used to believe that people who are homeless shouldn't have pets, but she had a change of heart after interviewing many pet owners who are homeless. "The owners are great," says Kai. "They just need someone to support them."

"Caring for my cats, Thor and Lily, is like having children that never grow up," says family member Chris. "We would be in serious trouble without getting vet care. It's expensive. It would mean I'd have to go without food for myself and other things, or worse – we'd have to give them up to the SPCA."

SPIRITUAL WELLNESS

First Nations Programs, Grief & Loss Support Group, Multi-Faith Chapel, Pastoral Care, Weddings & Memorials.

"I have hope that I never knew before," says family member Peter. "And it really is all because of Our Place."

Our Chaplain, Julianne Kasmer, has an inclusive approach to the spiritual and pastoral care she provides from the corner office in the drop-in centre. Julianne has enhanced opportunities for spiritual growth through welcoming multi-faith practices, including First Nations spirituality. Julianne believes that "deep listening, prayer and reflections are the keys to spiritual care." In partnership with Victoria Hospice, Julianne coordinates the Grief and Loss Support Group which facilitates confidential sharing and compassionate listening to anyone grieving the loss of a loved one. Almost weekly Our Place hosts a memorial service for a beloved family member who has passed away.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Advocacy, Counselling, Detox & Treatment, Support, Referrals for Housing.

The 45 adult residents living in transitional housing at Our Place have access to so much more than just shelter. With the guidance and support of the residential support workers and the mental health and addiction clinician, residents develop life skills and reach healthy goals that enable them to live rich, full and independent lives. During this past fiscal year, 20 people, ranging in age from 19 to 74, bid farewell to Our Place upon finding homes elsewhere in the Greater Victoria area. Outreach workers continue to support former residents transitioning to independent living.



A Year in Review

Through hard work and dedication, we meet a variety of critical needs. Here's a snapshot of this past fiscal year's services and supports.

Open
Monday
to Friday
7 am to
5 pm

Open for drop-in on
Sunday afternoons
as of June 1, 2013

360,436
meals
served

7,473
hot
showers
taken

2,211 one-on-one
sessions with
outreach workers

20 long-term
residents successfully
transitioned through
our housing program

706
housing
referrals
provided

265
employment
referrals
provided

108
detox and
treatment
referrals
provided

Open for
lunch on
weekends
as of Dec 1, 2012

725 acupressure
& acupuncture
treatments
provided

1,040
haircuts
provided

Open for
lunch & dinner
for statutory
holidays
as of April 2012

341 therapeutic
foot-care
treatments
provided

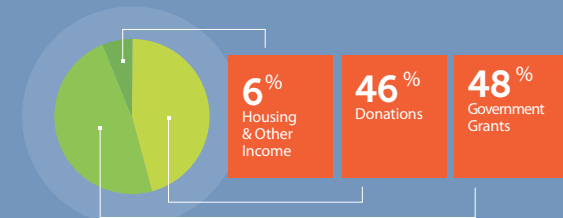
3,640
pet food
servings
dispensed

10,752
volunteer
shifts
worked

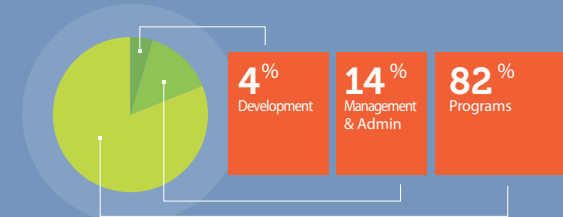
Financial Supports

Thousands of caring supporters 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
\$3,754,926



Expenses
\$3,591,418



Total Surplus	\$ 163,508
Allocation to Operating and Capital Reserves	\$ 120,000
Net Surplus	\$ 43,508

Our financial information is based on audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2013.

Vision for the Future

We are very excited about the year ahead. As we explore new ways to more fully utilize our resources, we look forward to offering additional opportunities to help people improve their lives. Our plans include doubling program opportunities in the areas of employment, education and healthcare while also increasing the hours Our Place is open on the weekends.

We will continue to build on our financial strength and encourage more community partnerships. With stable leadership in place, we begin a new year of hope and belonging at Our Place with confidence and optimism.

We invite you to partner with us.

With your support we can continue to serve the needs of our community's most vulnerable citizens.

