# Krista Thompson Says Goodbye

Speaker 1 ([00:00:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=6i8JoMNThyy2ghve3mDG4xbhdIVeOnyQ45_600Y6ZHsecrSTwVP8s69rsF5dFhX2YQ2FyO46-or5R1cd_HlX4cYyfx8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=4.54)):

You're listening to Under One Roof, a Covenant House Vancouver production. Under One Roof is your opportunity to hear conversations with subject matter experts on a variety of social justice and public policy issues. Covenant House Vancouver is dedicated to serving all youth with absolute respect and unconditional love, helping youth experiencing homelessness and protecting and safeguarding all youth in need. Please note that the views of our guests do not necessarily reflect the board, management,

 or staff here at Covenant House Vancouver. and now, Under One Roof.

Mark ([00:00:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=bhVXHvcVMWbAcC0rHNDuB-52iyG4ZpbZrgMVUDAzxaRlqJ44hRWqrOGS9xpIZi0GtVm_iLkdxzacBxsVmwb4Y0s_pys&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=42.17)):

Welcome to Under One Roof, a Covenant House Vancouver production. My name is Mark Savard and I'll be your host for today's episode. This month, Covenant house Vancouver is thrilled to speak to Krista Thompson, Chief Executive Officer at Covenant House on her 16 years of history. As she looks towards her retirement. By the time this episode airs, we will have said goodbye to Krista and welcome to new CEO. Welcome to the program, Krista.

Krista ([00:01:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Lw7-vsIoIvCg30CJUBrvSsYkI4mwqG8I6g43bknxkTX3EHlGixM6ncurUJd5duV_Aipjd4wgOw16O_3dHIPdqXa4B2M&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=65.19)):

Thanks very much, Mark.

Mark ([00:01:06](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=anYu_YWq5uRbntq6PaN1ZkUEGKULTaS7P-nUhbH0inZpHzeCGl4shkmDz3pzsNMLzVUKvCYVXxE0wzqs8CicUUrvnSc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=66.76)):

It's so great to have you here and to have this chance to have a chat about your time here at Covenant House.

Krista ([00:01:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hinf8vGf3YZ00upLjZQCiSOJpGIeRVnBXKWzPDjVs8GCvgsxV9U3E4pIyRCn0pJp8VavInHaM_yFLxyyR3hc97yf5BQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=72.22)):

Thank you very much. My pleasure.

Mark ([00:01:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xvwlzQX0Tl98sXVk65npYV2dwKvQ7XpbffPAnXJHXiPYhvVw4ymloBnaVaqgEJ6rjj2SJLrItCTbYzQ7rqYrJRJ4-n0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=74.24)):

Well, Krista, you have been at Covenant House for an incredible 16 years. And looking back to when you first started, what was it that drew you to Covenant House?

Krista ([00:01:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LND_eyHt-JArPiYYHz35_7_rbw1xW7YOY8SFNDBbv7PiIiLWMWqvLnbLgY8dtm6DXpu3P4FUxwJem9iTMIPbh22Exmw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=84.31)):

Well, 16 years, first of all, I, I can't believe it's been 16 years. It's gone by, in such a blink, you know, and you really love your job. you know, time goes past very quickly and I've certainly loved my job. Been very, very, very fortunate to have this opportunity to work with young people and to work with such an incredible team of people here at Covenant House. Um, so you know, my own personal journey as a young adolescent is probably where my passion is rooted for the work. And, I didn't discover it or uncover it until I was probably in my mid-thirties. When I had been, I'd been involved in the business sector. I'd been a finance advisor. I had, you know, been in marketing, I'd studied business at school. And after 10 years working in finance, I started to do some volunteer work with, uh, at risk adolescence.

Krista ([00:02:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CZhlhO3zZzQostIymbiLu7RlT3c-AgGA-OMjjtmsSzuIWcXsYoLJzfP-xxXBFS0ZQvZhJoLPdsMeG-zBTebODVLQ_wQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=138.55)):

And I realized that I was much more, enjoying my volunteer work much more than my business work. So when I had the opportunity to change careers, I was able to do that and shifted to working in the nonprofit sector and I, I needed to learn a lot. So I, you know, I worked in healthcare, supporting health organizations. I worked in large hospitals, supporting hospitals and, new programs within a hospital system in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. And after about 25, 30 years of that, I was very fortunate to hear that my friend Sandy cook was retiring from his role here at Covenant House. And of course I knew a lot about our org, about this organization, through Sandy, but also my interest in working with at risk adolescence. So, very fortunately the board chose me as Sandy's successor.

Krista ([00:03:20](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=l4oZdKWIrPELBpR_QNqDu2LxnGZPvmz9pK0A3VQvC3e8nIM1R6-hhJyqFG_Mbx_XPS6m9x5DJA0P_hjpnknur5bKYPQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=200.33)):

So, you know, honestly, I, I, I talked to them about my job here at Covenant House being my dream job and a job that I had probably been training for unknowingly for my entire career. So I was prob, I think I was 46, 47 years of age when I started here. And I'm actually, I've got my, my math is wrong, but yeah, 46, 47. And, I real, literally pinched myself the first year I was here. I was so happy to be at Covenant House. Just seemed like the perfect place to be able to vision and help young people to begin to realize their dreams.

Mark ([00:04:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=7BzBRqzxvaNimDNVrBz56VqCJ4I8S4knQPcyD5el8GNMA6yrV9eWes7gb0vTqqipRSq7YOAAnq3YjWrwQnfEqLbLRnU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=244.15)):

Wow. Yeah. I just wanted to pick up a little bit just to ask you about your very first experience with the, the adolescence when you volunteered. You talked about that being kind of the, the linchpin before you, of course, came to Covenant House. What was that like? What was the first experience like when you connected with these young people?

Krista ([00:04:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VbWgtWY1Dh9nCHXtRweusYNvGWvmpiQQXI-WKYndbcxmkyhOg53HyfcoHn5MKrcyW4lyW8YYbVwdzpbwSPf87xKozD0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=266.42)):

Humbling. Yeah, you know, I, I really had thought that my own adolescence was very difficult and, you know, through some lenses, it absolutely would've been, I lived in a, you know, in a very much a mainstream family, but my, my father died very young. My mother remarried, there was a very troubled relationship there. And, my mother and stepfather, you know, developed serious addictions to alcohol and prescription drugs. And, my sisters and I were quite young, I had two younger sisters and, you know, we all three of us lived, lived in a very nightmarish, frankly, scenario, which a lot of our young people at Covenant House can relate to, but, you know, I'm a, you know, I'm a eighth generation white settler. And so had enormous privilege that I began to understand when I started to meet young people who did not have that privilege.

Krista ([00:05:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=x0c7Rz0yuy2Dbuz_qtN4O9JOMWeWcaabz7KBNjDYNeVdEBOvZkKTKNAmkchqNnyuQhu9S0Mw5J4nzbVvw-dak7dmxt4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=326.31)):

Um, and the first organization that I was volunteering with, you know, I was so naive, frankly, and, and very green at understanding the, this world that my sister and I started our own nonprofit organization. This was before Covenant House existed and it was a program for, at-risk young women who were leaving trafficking. And so we raised some money and we opened a program in a home actually in, on the west side of Vancouver. And we ran the organization with other, with a very small group of staff, for about four years. And, and I learned a lot about young people, but I also learned how not to run a nonprofit organization, you know, understanding what it takes in terms of, you know, consistent operating funding in order to be able to maintain and offer the kind of services that young people require. So, I'm not sure if that answers your question, but That's that sort of the shift that I made.

Mark ([00:06:33](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=-dftOoNnDvldzt20CayWdm2rHxrwsFKEiWXnH7iMK5AfTZsQMsxzRCfokycCwTCNqVNToNzDbZw1-EvX_TZxA3T1CU4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=393.38)):

Well, I can identify when you talked about coming in and the, I came in, myself and I was completely naive coming in. And, we, I started just a little bit before you, and I saw these young people as, wow. I, you know, I didn't know the back stories where they're coming from and they were all so scary, but then you learn very quickly that they're such, they're coming with presenting with broken individuals that just need to be loved. And, yeah, so I can completely identify with that in my first few months here at Covenant House. So well, I, and I wanted to, yeah. Circle back to the 16 years is a long time to be with one organization. And when you first started, what was the landscape like in the at-risk homeless youth sector at Covenant House?

Krista ([00:07:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=whBME04SWmFdOvj85OrUTD7GOQb5UBJ0V_67wSohjmCzqDv4T47FH7af_pDevtsv_rWDv3OEW_NvXntop3bsnWd1R-k&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=442.17)):

Well, I think, you know, if we looked at the, if we look at the sector as a whole, you know, the housing slash homeless slash vulnerable population sector is in our world is quite focused on the adult population. So folks who have, you know, who have, who are well into adulthood and, and require housing. And that makes sense the the focus on young people. I think perhaps was not at the place where it is today. And, in addition, there were, there were an so many service providers, like, you know, my sister and I, you know, starting small kind of mom and pop startup organizations that were working in the city to support at risk populations. There were many of these very small organizations trying to, you know, do slivers of service provision in the continuum of support that both adults and, young people needed.

Krista ([00:08:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=KTbuwtntrNxwvVKAUSP5_O6ebKr9-N2Fhtys5KIYI8nfvVuvBGyy3wTCNgBLw3m291Xm9kWIdNuBn5Lop4zRnCssCQ0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=510)):

And it's not, wasn't not very efficient and probably even more fractured than it needed to be. So I think, I think the provincial government and probably other governments around the world started to look at the nonprofit resources that were in their community and start to help to consolidate those resources and create more streamlined, more continuous service array, so that it was easier for individuals to navigate those systems. And I think that now, you know, looking, looking now back 16 years, you know, certainly the provincial government of British Columbia through BC housing has created a, you know, much more seamless services to source housing, affordable housing, as well as non-market housing. Not that there, isn't obviously lots more to do, but, that's one, I think one significant change. So now you see a consolidation into four or five or six significant enterprises, nonprofit organizations that are, you know, specializing in housing provision.

Krista ([00:09:39](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uvOSKfLYGmw-D1q7iFDAcImo9xoZmoxH6TRbdj1UaS3bOYVFjQyhhyOcQaYbrkNpqmBMAEitz06mU5jek24Maby6-W4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=579.5599999)):

And, they are, you know, providing the vast majority of, of housing and in a, probably in a more efficient and effective way. Covenant House, you know, we have said, you know, our mandate internationally, our mandate is, is people ages 16 to their 25th birthday. So this is, this is a subpopulation of the homeless and at-risk group that, you know, because of our history and our interest, we believe in, we believe in working a little bit upstream from the adult issue, which sounds callous. But, you know, I think that we, what we've recognized is that adolescents by its very nature is unique, is transitioning is, requires a, a different approach and different models of support and care than, and a grown up person does. And I think we naturally understand that, and there's a lot of science that actually backs that up as well.

Krista ([00:10:48](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=a8wtoEDrl3IlyuabaKhXLZNcFNTIZqsLu3b4ejZmoMUKkM1cYaxtakPEFxNSRV4toU9yfTwLv5r7MYC5Knws2hQ904U&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=648.72)):

A lot of brain science, particularly, you know, again, we didn't understand these things so many years ago, but now that we understand much more about brain science, we really see that young people have, you know, the developmental stages that really do not, our brains really do not finish developing until we're 25. So a young person, you know, needs to rely on others to help them with decision making or to teach them about, you know, what, what judgement looks like, what at risk looks like, what worthiness looks like. And, you know, many of the young people we work with haven't had the experiences or the role models to actually naturally understand those things. And that's part of what, we're, what we, what we often will introduce to a young person's life when we, when we meet them.

Mark ([00:11:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=qmjScVkGdjjyKJzk0LzgUrGB362FJf1wgwL2JrQH4y8t836wB9v8ZFYkfT0oCt7BwW7kXieoSaM40SO8-n6EM72XeRk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=709.71)):

That's right. And one of the things that comes to mind when I think about some of the youth workers comments over the years is that we're, on top of sanctuary, we're providing a place where they can learn, and they can actually learn from failure as well, that it's, it's not the end of the world and that they can regroup and try a different tach. And, that's one of the things that just stuck with me over all these years as well. And, about one of the key things, when I think about sanctuary is that is the things that we take for granted a lot of us at our parents' side, where they, they encourage to explore and experiment and then pick us up when we fall.

Krista ([00:12:24](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=o6Qr_8pEV2GqzJOgv1zxq9WkJ0EASTQG1fyoUcuucZvlsFFilto9HIzCbvO7N8_XFT_L3zl0KAS9prfdLWxB3Nj88ak&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=744.66)):

Yeah, very much so. I mean, we can probably, each of us think back to conversations with particularly respected adults that said something or offered something where we started to realize that we were smart or that we were cared about, or that we had skills. We were okay. And many of the young people at Covenant House have never had that experience or have had the opposite experience. People have been discouraging or hateful or negligent or abusive, not all, but many of the young people come from those kinds of backgrounds. And it, you know, I, that, that just leads me to, to another, a thought Mark. And that is the, you know, looking back 16 years ago, our practice with young people was very grounded in older models of support, fondly known as, or actually not that fondly known as behaviour modification kind of models where it's sort of like, it's kind of like crime and punishment.

Krista ([00:13:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=748A33uEFn7zhZJwh8zr6d4W2lujiMy1rxYtT2Ecrqt4Sdgl7k6KbDqYCe8zytaVKAVj5OPhkTSJnZwCAQ7h2zLzBUI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=808.69)):

In other words, you break your curfew for you're discharged, you, you know, get caught with alcohol, you're discharged, you know, and sort of, you know, transgress and you get punished. And it, a lot of organizations like Covenant House worked on that form of behaviour modification did not work, especially as we started to see more complex presentations of young people in our community with growing, untreated mental health with growing addictions, reliance, and self-medication with a growing understanding of mental health and brain science, where we started to see that the most common emergence for schizophrenia is in with 18, 19 year olds. And so, you know, we as Covenant House began to realize that many of the young people we were working with had very complex needs and that we needed to step up big time in order to understand what those needs were, start to work on some of the more progressive, modern theories of attachment. Trauma, trauma informed, and providing more sophisticated mental health support to these young people.

Mark ([00:14:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CR3qauj5jWnTJgWwtBmLILA8A6-nRvV9mvvaMA6EOX2w1Fb2QCVrlTRBaWlEtCCcrri-yYd1ZlUT0ITKFtUfmLrGugc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=884.44)):

Yeah, I'm, that's, that's one of the things I'm so proud of is to the things that we've achieved, over the years and how we've evolved to meet the changing needs of the youth that we serve. And, when I think about, you know, the Foundry now and how we, we started that back in the day when, when the, the doctors were coming here and it was a pilot project and, look at it now, and now they're, they've got satellite sites in BC and, we were kind of at the origins of that, the seat of that. So, and

Krista ([00:15:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=wS4LlUOrXYJorzoC9egjVK9FppZc6TmcYJePJvA_ptmnjA5_iafVEWnKpt08XwAvspUIo8PQS7rZ9z5rNNN_-qWfbAE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=914.02)):

Yeah, and how, and how fortunate we were that people like Steve Mathias, Dr. Steve Mathias and Dr. Bill McEwen, who were working with young adolescents, in emergency departments and seeing the corner cycling through emergency departments of young people, that it would get some, you know, treatment, but then would be turned right back to the street. You know, how difficult it was for them to comply with medication, how difficult it was for them to comply with their appointment schedules, even if they had a, had a caregiver or a physician working with them. And, you know, just putting our heads together with those guys and some resources from Providence Health and, some resources from Covenant House. We started to bring the doctors and the young people together in our buildings and the, you know, treatment and compliance ratios, skyrocketed and eye rocketed. And, you know, it was very fast and it was so rewarding to see how quickly we were able to with, with a relatively small change that didn't actually add a lot to cost. In fact, probably reduce cost. We were able to really make a real difference for young people who were particularly young people who were pre-acute phase mental health to avoid, you know, heading down that path.

Mark ([00:16:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PKXtzuOb6C5AIIGjBDko3g2CLRapq5_kzChDOcBTbpHtRol2z2i-gvIMAkugSRCW3ILmPXiv5vXbalqCgAbWL9xhEhw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=992.1)):

Yeah. I remember the reactions now that triggers that memory of how the youth workers were so impressed with the turnaround and how quickly that happened. And, that's a good point too, that there's so many, especially more severe disorders that manifest in late adolescence. And that's, it's so crucial to, to get it, at that point in time

Krista ([00:16:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=PzzpNIgAk-cQYurtgcQnMEKDaDBcPstzu1oXHaxncgCMVUvapQ9Ed0kJtohjBVxuLSw8l8PNSvQ_ITSUUBW_Jlq0aA4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1013.58)):

Early. Yes, exactly. Early intervention makes a huge difference. And, you know, thanks to, to Steve Matthias and bill McEwen and us, we did incubate that the, the Foundry many years ago here at Covenant House and that model was able to be replicated. You know, I think Dr. Steve worked very hard to make that happen. And now, so proud to say, see the Foundry opening across the province, you know, mental health services accessible, affordable mental health, health services for young people all across the province. And that in our new buildings here at Covenant House, we actually have a sign in the door that says the Foundry, and we'll be offering the Foundry services once again, on site in our building, along with medical support and other, nursing support, sexual health support, medication support. Yeah. It's a beautiful thing to see.

Mark ([00:17:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=OgZsK7loNFcuLDVe_1brrQfTxTKzSBMVNjsbon94rv5YXx_LwPChaoS2d6AeHfLDTct7vSd2PaCutR3W42OdX1nwevg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1067.59)):

Yeah, we'll be talking about that in a bit, but yeah, the wraparound services are so exciting to see come online. Well, I wanted to also look back in the past and talk about our strategic learning initiative, which commenced in 2010. And, it indicated that a growing need for services for youth, how did the strategic process inform our decision to expand our services to the three buildings we're working with now?

Krista ([00:18:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=j-j3rGZx92mZ68VCMJqglze6LgHBDwi_tW_MTt1e2v4ZKG2OgR2Zu7ZfQym7ElZgGeY7-iW3BxUPe3Q9n23rNQchpJ8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1092.8699999)):

Yeah, well, we had a board meeting that, you know, back in 2010, I mean, everybody was very focused on the Olympics. It was a very exciting time in the city. And I think every organization decided they were going to have a strategic plan that would envision, you know, the next 10 years of their life, you know, every second organization had, was birthing something called, you know, strategic plan, 2020, you know, let's look into the future, because we're optimistic and we want things to happen intentionally. And we were no different. We sat down with our board in, in 2010. I mean, we, at that point, we were still in semi startup phase here in Vancouver. We were still relatively small. We had not really had a long term plan that we were working from. We were kind of working on annual operating plans, you know, just driving all of our services and, and funding to the front door of the organization to ensure that we, you know, were able to serve as many young people as possible sort of semi-crisis mode all the time.

Krista ([00:19:18](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=O0IndQiQZWN5A6N5XnQl2WbvxLnFSfrdV9KC9ZaFaxEbA1pDuF96GKhEa8d7BdoPHCr4kreQhgEG0f5EUzr5W2lrSto&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1158.57)):

But we had a moment to pause and we had a little few resources to be able to pause and pause in our thinking and say, okay, who are the young people that are going to be coming to us over the next 10 to 20 years? What will their needs be? What will our role be in supporting those young people? What services will exist in the city? What gaps will there be? And are we in a position to fill some of those gaps for young people? So the board pushed us to answer those questions and we took a year of study to do exactly that. We hired a research firm to help us do a literature review to really look not just in Canada, but in British Columbia, but also across the world as to what were people saying about best practice? What were people saying about the population trends and the demography?

Krista ([00:20:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=tpBx8W3cgdF9KwNaI2kOn-Ypl4U_Gv1SYy3LtsgWHyMQDEZgZh0_FcgczDSZDCs_hqghiuhtb0YNkqqzNBznDuDML0s&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1212.64)):

And, we came up with a, I think, a very clear picture. What of, who young people are going to be coming to our city and needing our services. And so what we learned was there was about, you know, there was going to be a growth in that youth population, youth homeless population that would kind of mirror the population growth of the province. So growing by one point half to 2% a year, and in, so not a huge, you know, tsunami of young people coming at us, which is part of our fear, but within that growth and within that population of young people, what we saw through the research was emerging trends. So there were some young people who were overrepresented in the homeless population, and these were young people who identified as Indigenous, highly overrepresented, young people who identified as LGBTQ2S highly represent overrepresented in the homeless population and, young women who were underrepresented in our buildings, which didn't make sense, because we knew through the research that they actually represented 50% of the population.

Krista ([00:21:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QPKGIXiGblwmoICng9Q0C1Vd99furad7_BeCKYgVxh0M1K0LaePG4XAHFzu4bdTF459C7iQwLCQnLqcDN5_iqwgPr-o&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1291.16)):

So this gave us some real clues as to directions that we needed to head. And we did a gap analysis as well. We also did a, you know, sort of prioritize some of the gaps that, that emerged. And we came up with six key gaps that really informed where we are right now as an organization. And we thought about what kind of programs would these young people need in order to help them with a transformational kind of journey, for their, in their lives. And once we figured out the programs, which included the core programs, we were running at the time, but also some significant enhancements to those programs. Once we figured out those enhancements, we realized that we would probably need at least double the, the physical space that we were operating in at that time. And so, we started with, we started with putting the young people at the centre of the picture.

Krista ([00:22:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=htOG1dkHhKUT7lJfL8XPgHcWVL6q8biQ0Dou_0eZ2-HMrBABoSfsaXxB3ZCP4CCOLjgN7anHD42_irScbRBc2kFp7dY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1346.25)):

We then built out the programs and services that would be required. And then we fitted the facilities to match that, which, I think, which at the time was quite a unique approach to developing the organization, glad we did. And you know, miraculous, not miraculously with a lot of hard work and a lot of support from the community we now have opened. Just the other day, our new 10-storey building in Yaletown alongside our five-storey building across the road, you know, more than double this, the facilities that we operated back in, in 2010 when we first started this project and that is included more than doubling the number of Crisis Program beds. It will mean doubling our Rights of Passage program, the units and, will also mean a whole new array of support services, including addiction, support, education support, mental health support, art therapy, medical clinic, a whole array of supports on site. So the young person can easily, easily and quickly access all the support that they need. Whatever stage they're at in their journey.

Mark ([00:23:44](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=f5C66seGzU8heAwSZMPXBfgAnQDjpxIxYvyKUZYVvtLtizjUuIKYUKfnb2QIkAJWRKWfuqU_7RmVJ3lDmex8EfmDDK4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1424.75)):

The wraparound services are providing that the one, the one stop shop of, you know, of love and support where they can explore their talents and the new beginnings. And that's what excites me very much when I think about just the art studio and Dr. Keith he's just over the moon about that. And so were our, our supporters when they saw it, it was, I heard so many great comments about the spaces.

Krista ([00:24:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=aTFuDulE14Rdj2PAGr7htyY0uLXnyK3KZRC4jExGWImlFJHBwO1M_HUBiSVO4c6LaZx21vxwu71RUinbBANODtikuA0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1449.77)):

So, well, and you know, we, we have nearly a full-size gym in the new building and, you know, people look at that and go, wow, that's pretty, that's a pretty luxurious offering, isn't it? In a, in a real estate market like Vancouver where every square foot counts. Right. But what we know is that, you know, exercise and physical wellness is so integral to our wellbeing, our mental health, our, our, our ability to be able to think our ability to be able to, to eat healthily. I mean, all these factors play into it. And so many community centres in our, in our city are, are full. And yeah, our young people weren't able to access those supports. So having, having a gym and a fitness room and a yoga studio on site, for our young people is, is I think going to make a huge difference in their, in their outcomes and, not to harp on this too much, but youth work when done really well and effectively is actually activity-based work.

Krista ([00:25:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=HzdIVBwmgVVaPFR3jrgOoNuEHv-1DxWKbTJyYOtIzViRlMY6hDp80MFRNqqR6M6Eup_LXbs_iXQ1vocsBqFzlnpuQZA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1514.59)):

 So versus sitting, you know, across a table, looking your counsellor in the eye and maybe feeling shy or inarticulate or uncomfortable, you know, having a discussion about your personal feelings or about the challenges that you have as a young person, you're standing on a treadmill, you know, side by side, you know, sort of having spontaneous conversation. You're sitting down at an, at an easel drawing and your, you know, so your youth worker is, is engaging with you while you're both creating evocative pieces of, of art and, you know sharing a meal in a beautiful space. You know, these are things that can create spontaneous connection and develop trust and, and conversation. So young people can start to work through the issues with a trusted caring.

Mark ([00:26:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=hBxiKFIHx3xYzle3smcmx1OqlyaB-2xonWQHB4imTlmmpUTy53lCEI9oH-zHFSji_sSoKahd7w9JGKJuqu23sW7bEoA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1572.89)):

Absolutely. And it allows for all those different, every youth is unique and some, one thing might work better for one youth like doing one on one in the gym, you know, basketball or whatever, or, or in the art room. if they're not comfortable really speaking one on one. So, yeah, that's so cool. So I, but I do want to circle back to when we, you touched on about gender and especially where women were 50% of our population, and in 2014, we split our Crisis Program into two programs divided by gender. Why was that an important thing to do and what changed after we made that transition?

Krista ([00:26:54](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=w8EBqUhe6sLp9UyWAhgqntBzZ2cnbhyrSilk9PmpsHX2qGmLiUcdG6a-K0HEW55l-j3rzWkkcf8d3V5fyXv57v5-U48&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1614.7)):

Yeah, well, what we, you know, we were so puzzled by this, by the disproportionate nature of the clients that we were serving, as I say, there was, we know that women, young women and girls make up half of the population. And yet only about 20 to 30% of the young people that were using our services were young women and girls. So where were they? And so we did, we dug into that and started to do some research, but also started to talk to young people and other service providers about this. What we discovered was that young women and girls are often part of the most hidden homeless in the system. And, you know, they, because of their vulnerability, often, you know, put themselves in places where they're not in the mainstream homeless population. Sometimes those are dangerous places that feel safer than the general population.

Krista ([00:28:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=a73LWcmSNFX2Lu4dEYQv9UFgMHFGW31Y9jzJaI-5v_ee5t1abInlcj9VHYEjABwT62_R8ZmcmZeGkSVdVLWQtrEaXGc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1680.49)):

 and sometimes it means, you know, attaching yourself to a person or a predator that would offer some kind of, you know, protection from the street. And so young women were, were sort of on a often on a different path because of their own personal vulnerabilities. Second reason is that young women did not necessarily feel safe with men and boys in, in the same residential spaces that they were occupying, which, you know, given, given the physical differences and some of the backgrounds of some of the young people, uh, was completely understandable. So that led us to, you know, now it seems like kind of a no brainer, but at the time, you know, we were running co-ed programs, partly because we had so little space. Yeah. But also because that's the way we'd always done it. And, you know, because we were working with less complex youth, we could, we could manage it, but when we decided to give young women their own space and we, we did some renovations to make that happen all of a sudden, within a period of, within a, within a year, I would say we were serving as many, almost as many young people as we were, young women and girls as we were, we were boys.

Krista ([00:29:22](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Mey3bFewYMQrqox-aQ5W4S-C26vczgPZcSEUEb1NXHlgE1ieKGp4Ze21zcKOj5TQZzM92bgYB5eRXOD7Z3WWDctq_eE&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1762.12)):

And we didn't, you know, we didn't reduce services to boys. In fact, you know, that we increased services to boys, but we provided young women with their own space. And it's been a very interesting journey of how different working with girls can be for a whole variety of reasons. But I'm so glad we did it because I think there, I think that we are, we are able to support young women in a much better way. And they they're telling that they're telling us that themselves.

Mark([00:29:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=s4IOIFURvKvRUAJUiJBeIatbXnag2Ef29tCXNYayyu_CEQ3DvElMrdRY4giILBc_md3KzlZiEsme-u_8EcebTXxK2U8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1792.25)):

Right. And we, we saw a massive increase in the, the women, young women or female identified youth that we served. It was, I don't know if it was in the first year, but we saw 200, 200% increase in the number of young women that we were working with. So, that, and then of course the other part of that story is the LGBTQ and, and, and gender. if you could speak to that a little bit, because that was also a game changer too, when we, we went into gender specific spaces.

Krista ([00:30:21](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NOqkShggwEYWnFXyZJp8Zj7zTGWCxwmrUeOKiaCa_V5j-WEa6XC0TkeFU9h2ygl9aiqq3nOaweCMhA_bBouCSjIaCmM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1821.53))

Yeah. Well I, you know, first of all, you know, we think of ourselves as a very diverse city, very friendly city to people of all faiths cultures and sexual orientation. And I think to a great degree of Vancouver compared to many other cities is however, when you go outside the urban core, and into the suburbs and farther afield, there are, there is probably less tolerance in some communities for LGBTQ youth to be out and to be free to share their identities with, with them, with their communities and with their families. And because of that, and because families and communities, sometimes reject those young people or young people do not feel safe in those communities, They come and are attracted to places like city of Vancouver to, to have more opportunity for community and safety and to feel that they could be themselves.

Krista ([00:31:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=AhdStBdOHkNhcYt0SfW1_bc8cfKw61fbIFiGnTclp5LgWQcm__n5Nw75B0L5VnZaUWvvCHLHlevNIaAIF6dcCE9lgpQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1886.78))

And so what, what I know is, and having lived in some of those communities and having seen in the high schools and with my, some of my kids' friends, how vulnerable and how naive some of those young people are, you know, they're just, they're sort of burgeoning, blossoming in their life. And they've had very little experience of living in a, in an urban centre, especially one that has all the challenges and risks that and, and dangers, frankly, that any large urban centre has. And. and they get taken advantage of which is, you know, not to say that these aren't smart savvy young people, but, you know, they just are looking for, are looking for looking for respite and looking for care. And sometimes it's offered by their own people and, and they can be, they can really, find themselves in difficulty. So, you know, to be able to start to be an organization that stands alongside the LGBTQ community to offer support to these young people has, has been a, one of the things I think I'm probably most proud of.

Mark ([00:32:47](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=J5qSflYjTDC30_nAI2wo5j3zwt46-O8iw6eL_KZPwhrJLiXi04h7csi0pTjkeZT4EJp0dFYVbP5Ql9J8h-x_jAJzqq8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1967.02)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>

Mark ([00:32:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=D4zR0Xk-z7x7kf26JBWiXODD70pvPkYu3VvtwqvPkDEALsmXueJRwAywQpECX_sgPzMW13yCvTdtGjYADW5y3Dj7iQ8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1969.9)):

I know, I, I'm very proud of the fact that, especially with our youth-centric model, that we've been able, you know, we went to the youth population and one of the things that the LGBTQ2S+ population said was that, you know, identify it on at street level with our new buildings and that's what we did. And to show that it's safe to come in, right, right there, not don't wait until I get in the building, show it on, you know, at street level. And I guess

Krista ([00:33:17](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=CmsCtovDpCnwN9sWMbj4i3AjyANji1nqq3xGkjqvMvYXQkLq0dM9hnNJAwtGocIUveDObfH_BEOf_nU75lIdO2WADVM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=1997.95)):

That putting, putting, you know, visible signs, rainbow insignia, and recently the trans, flag, outside our building was a, was just, you know, just made all of our hearts, just sing. And, you know, and we were also during, in the, in that exercise of starting to be more sensitive, to, and welcoming to youth who identified, we, we also started to attract more staff board members, volunteers, community partners that could see that we were making that effort and could, you know, could also join our efforts and practise and be the young, be these wonderful, healthy role models for our young people.

Mark ([00:34:12](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=guf3JecuzG9mm1KOJGiGFzMDSORRVDSh7LUcssJGIprST9uuzgXUvqfzLOn9TdfX6gR8YfxFV-vESmamWk3UI_ofiSI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2052.96)):

<affirmative>. And also,

Krista ([00:34:15](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Tt708l02FgUXcf14pcDu4sEl2yxvJpz8nS0SHP8TuAlCmcN4llqvvGvQpZRvKlhxOd7zfInhc4CA37Ogb8XcbkntsXk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2055.04)):

It's amazing to think. I honestly, in today's world, it is, it's shocking to think that we didn't, we weren't there as an organization, but, you know, we had very conservative roots and many of our, you know, we were fearful that we would somehow alienate some of our more conservative supporters, but in fact, the opposite happened. And so many more people came to help us when we, they could see that we were, you know, modernizing and opening our, our programs to all youth, no matter what their, what their direction or their preferences were.

Mark ([00:34:52](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8n7UkUamF1ckv15S-RucB4ZDCI2uBUdK9NMijZUDzzo6cJ_eTaqoFoZ8joNbzdQ9rgG89yvlbR2BjYgX00024wpbfdM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2092.17)):

Yeah. In my time here, I've seen that, especially with all my communities speaking, I've seen that shift a pretty seismic shift over the years and on all sorts of levels. But, when it came to the LGBTQ2S+ crowd, people were very suitably impressed that what we had done, especially with the gender specific spaces. So I had nothing but incredibly positive, feedback from that over from all sorts of different groups and demographics and age ranges. So, it's, it's become very well known in the community and people are really proud of us for that. So,

Krista ([00:35:26](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VY6d3yb-zy1xS2_Tsq1kDHErU9V8EBMYnSxZT0Wwm_FXmGw99snhSQHu1OThe-wwAA-1HRhY9eXVrIhsUYjeij_xQvQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2126)):

Yeah. And we're, I think we're in Pride this year for the first time.

Mark ([00:35:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NJOX1MSIf16QzxVJ9pPrYATb3sLI_Mg9BACrAnqajurwkzbKRdNwKkcCA17foiDzwQ0_2g6zpi5z3LS_HF81S8GZTt0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2128.52)):

Yes.

Krista ([00:35:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=XxLcHeE1SNgHfO76ti2_X2Ph49UAOREv1UcvVzoNyb8efQLy-PDUe-8SpkZvEBDd-kvfKDQlzVBio4FeNQkng_M_7mc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2129.52)):

Yay

Mark ([00:35:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=xYitrG8fMOEtcjAVzvwZETqV8ZTeD6hJcRIXZdmkQ_SocJDeMEPGbeNG2Wmb8s5IdFRccVxBAVVuSqMFWla6lD48BWw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2129.7399999)):

And we have a rainbow committee. Yeah. And we put ourselves through the True Colors audit. So hopefully you we're just going to get better and better with that. And, well, I, I want to switch gears a little bit, but I wanted to talk to you about the budget, where it was when, in our early days versus now. And when you first started, the annual budget was $7 million and now, or around 24 million. In addition, we only had about 76 staff and it's grown to close to 200, one hundred and 98. Can you talk about the differences in managing a medium size nonprofit versus a larger nonprofit?

Krista ([00:36:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RKSDT3T58fLIXFGdJXkCC0LFBrqbDci6C9BpZx6AaQKr2BH6oSUVoDf8Cp0NYXE-n0GNNuDOIg7O9UHDtNA69Vr4WvQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2169.28)):

Well, I used to know everybody's name for one thing and I loved it. You know, when we were, when we were a smaller organization, you know, it, it, we, we were, so I felt so connected to, to everyone in the organization. That's kind of selfish on my part to feel, you know, your, to, to just know everybody and know their stories and know their families. And, that for me personally, was a, was an unexpected and not great shift to, to growth. now there's, you know, there, I, I hang out in spaces where I, you know, there's, I don't know the individual staff I'm meeting them for the first time, for example, or I'm terrible with names, especially the older I get. And I, you know, I've forgotten people's names. So, I mean, that's a small piece, but that's, you know, as, as a leader, and other leaders will tell you this, it's yeah, it is, it does require some, you know, new practices and new ways of thinking about leadership.

Krista ([00:37:05](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=QkGFuUV4Q9_kQfV7s6VTJ7uPisEElcpm6IpVSFPUiGTHFgHEhgFPtOkU5ru8Jzqb0TE9OC0TjjBsUTyIeSXjhwJ1Fuc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2225.27)):

Delegation becomes more important. systems become more important, you know, infrastructure and organized infrastructure like HR programs and benefits programs, and, you know doing a good job in terms of recruiting and, and retaining staff becomes a more dominant part of the conversation and of hiring more professional people to help you with that. And, I think you, we know we did the, the difference for, well, the good thing I think for us was that we did it all intentionally, and we, we grounded ourselves in the 2010 plan where we knew we were going to be growing the organization significantly, which meant that we knew we would need to raise more money and we would need to hire more staff. So we started to plan for that and we started to fix our IT infrastructure. And we started to, you know, become more sophisticated with our fundraising practices and more effective and more efficient at all those things.

Krista ([00:38:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=GzAWThyKWg474U3LutPAEw5O-LlifRpHtXmvGSd7fQE-SbWpLCxaC1gTwehENJrqk-P937gVG6IK_ccYntkVTzi6H2I&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2289.79)):

And luckily, I mean, I had a business background and I hired some folks who had a business background as well, who had the heart for the work, but also had the experience to build kind of a business-oriented enterprise at the same time to be able to, to, to offer the kinds of human services that we wanted to offer. So, I think that's the challenge for any nonprofit organization is, you know, first of all, understanding how complicated a nonprofit can be, because we have, you know, different kinds of products that we're offering much more intangible. We have to learn how to market those products, even though they're intangible, you have to understand that you've got a lot of different stakeholders, you know, in business, you have a customer, you might have a regulator, you might have a shareholder in the nonprofit sector, you've also got regulators, you've got public funders, you've got private funders, you have volunteers of various stripes.

Krista ([00:39:14](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=azjIaalfcjk0REjWSPptr_CEMg9uZpQLqYSN5PoC7ijo08W-SsIN0M2t-MfWiL-qysPPCxjGnmWdZ0jmnVFHlI0_gmg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2354)):

You have, you know, you're trying to connect the business community with, with, you know, community-oriented projects. And you can, you know, you're not using debt like most nonprofits do not use debt in the same way that a, a private equity firm would be able to grow their business using capital or private equity, nonprofits, You know, at least in most cases can't, or don't do that. And so it takes a lot of creativity and, and, hard work to build a revenue stream that will support the size enterprise that we need to be able to offer services.

Mark ([00:39:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0Ev_Uxi3XUXeZwB7i8WCuXM2ucIVRGYpj90Dkj7fsCvR-6sCFcPiSafWhUYemgRc9sPVLMhWF9CkRUDQi_JRRBcsF5k&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2393.39)):

Mm-hmm <affirmative>, I think we've done an amazing job when you talked about all the, the various aspects of what it took to grow on all sorts of levels. When I think about just like things like internal communications and we, you know, all those things as we get bigger and bigger, I think we've done an amazing job. Being able to stay cohesive, even though we've, we've grown significantly since both of you And I started when I think about all the names that I used to know, but, uh, yeah, but one thing that hasn't changed, I, I know you've always said, you know, pop in when you, if you're over at, you're your office in the Pender street building and I’d always, if you're around, I'd poke my head in. So that was lovely that you always had that access, if you were around, you know, if you weren't busy in a meeting or something, but

Krista ([00:40:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kc49U5cYIYk1Tsd9AjBwtSOkT3xzhWZIUkxRFZFxorA7d-S8RMcjhx9uxd88x6QnDRYM_1Fttaq4k77hg_LnDHgQmIk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2432.53)):

Purely selfish on my part. <laugh>, I, I love people. So, you know, if I don't have people around me, I just don't have the energy or ideas or, or enthusiasm that, that you need. other people aren't, you know, that doesn't feed, feed their soul, but it does mine. So for me, it was always very selfish. And, I, I, I found that I found the pandemic incredibly hard because of the isolation. And I think a lot, we, we know we're not going to talk a lot about, about the pandemic here, but I think a lot of nonprofit organizations really struggled along with many other organizations to, to keep our very relationship-focused practice, grounded in relationships in the way that we, that we had been used to and how we are very much looking forward and very happy to be experiencing those connections again, internally. Anyway,

Mark ([00:41:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uZsoK_o2qg03VeuAJ7_6by4ERGxBCrbnCpvkIN2Q-x3RzDx_1nh7L8sUkKFyzmSv8CRdjVXWFGIaw-NGRnf5W9YYq-4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2487.89)):

Especially from my role in community, that all came to a crashing halt and a lot of it virtual, but, people were there for us, which was awesome. And we saw some amazing pivoting happening with our front lines and how we made connections with youth that were otherwise not really connecting with us when I think about the outreach workers, bringing it to the street sidewalk, literally. And we were able to connect with very street entrenched youth, that it was just, I was like, wow, these people are just, they they're so on it, these frontline staff, you know, they just think of new ways to do things when they're facing adversity and look at what happened as a result. So,

Krista ([00:42:03](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=j-vQj8AsvPDcMnOuFwKfrCaH1f50J4Y2ss_3MQQx8L22isHI0CF_SoBi6VC80-qDdTDS9jp6mNr72wUnW-eolo6LJuA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2523.94)):

Yeah. We created, we also created some expertise that we didn't have either. You know, we were able to, we, we have running a, a harm reduction pilot project today that, you know, we certainly envisioned running, but I don't, I think that the, I think the pandemic actually helped us understand how urgent it was that we, that we offer harm reduction supplies. And we were fortunate to be able to, you know, how we already had a team of outreach workers that could deliver on those, on that program. yeah, that's a whole other conversation, but, yeah, so there's some silver linings in the pandemic. The other thing is that we've always been very fortunate in that we have encountered the right help when we needed that help. So many of our business practices have been informed by advisors who sometimes charged us for their expertise. Sometimes didn't charge us for our, their expertise. We learned a lot about how to build capacity. We learned a lot about, you know, most savvy kind of marketing practices. We've learned a lot about HR from people who have volunteered their time to help us and advised us on how to set these things up. So that's also been, and that's helped us build on success and get better at what we do. It's all, all leads to, not perfection because we certainly aren't there, but better,

Mark ([00:43:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=uDk-0X6WwprHi-97jk0QZZ2OS4_UG6qbQ7DPITEmam926pwgHvx1wC0YpAuU-RirT3kmBRyz3VNuxrODlejKbyerxgw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2608.4899999)):

Well,

Krista ([00:43:28](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=q7KiMzL5McO7EdzDYkW8XboKTDq6rkbjKDg7D-jpFAaqpVsbhw23lpW8MvsUyCWikaxB4sgfZgLzBfr2g8lnQAg7QJc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2608.78)):

Better and more

Mark ([00:43:30](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pF8ofYs0trbdd1aLOfUKRCccXO5MLr5VKVWAtZWcw5MovR8n67qGyQYsqlotAU5cJCrH0zjgfelOALcPu6nX76cYick&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2610.4899999)):

Well, and I, I wanted to ask you about, and as you've touched on this earlier, prior to working at Covenant House, you came from the business world and during your time at Covenant House, you've been able to lean on that community to support the work that we do here at Covenant House. Can you talk about the partnerships that Covenant House has with the business community and why it's important for businesses to give back?

Krista ([00:43:53](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=SxR1KUfkFx_ri-Ve9Uj800G4KSr9LfcJmUj2_ljBiwfyv8X4uh1lBCnkINxo2Y_Lq7qLQBNLjcKI8lBtNpZMcgZPLSI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2633.89)):

Yeah, I mean, I, I think that most of us would, would understand that if you're a business offering goods, goods and services in, in a community, you need a healthy community in order to be successful. You need customers who have the wherewithal to purchase your goods and services and without solid offerings to, to lift up more vulnerable members of the community or people who are in, you know, who have stumbled into some difficulty, you know, the, the health of our community generally is deeply affected by, by, by those benefits. And, when we're all better off, we're all better off in essence. And I think visionary business leaders understand that and the rise of ESG, and corporate social responsibility that was something that we didn't talk about 15 years ago. We talk about nothing else these days.

Krista ([00:44:58](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=oEsDTDCjpZok1RS_LO8BV9jo8h79MJ2KVe3acdNgV5glGDbPoShx3ahlQystGUtYqTwspJ6vmmyGTO0RIcjw2BmETtg&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2698.03)):

It seems like, and you're starting to see, you know, shareholder activism, pushing corporations to do this, but you're also seeing, you know, leaders and executives and workers within corporations say, I'm, I care about what's going on in my community. I care about hospitals. I care about, you know, animals. I care about the environment. I want to work at a place where I feel like those values are practised as well. So employees are also part of that conversation. And, you know, from my perspective, you know, as a looking for resources and understanding that, you know, no one sector can take care of these problems alone, we have to work together. And I mean, working with business, working with government and working with NGOs like Covenant House, it has to be a joint effort. And without the might of those three parts of the, of, of our economy, we won't get as far as we need to get.

Krista ([00:46:04](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=MzHlREBE2UTdcAXQ4h3QS7uAkMpbXL_wxiy0XA-_vrslHjx165ozU3QndwJJVyaevIytlb8fu0zoXcnx4p8LcqNRnJQ&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2764.92)):

And I think there's a much more general understanding of that these days. And it's wonderful to see. I mean, when I first started working with, at risk youth back at Catalyst House, you know, I would be literally on the phone, calling people for donations and, and you know, of whatever they could give us. And people didn't understand that young people weren't making a choice to be on the street, you know? “Well, you know, I raised myself up on my bootstrap, so they should be able to do that too,” click, you know, hang literally because they just didn't understand that through no fault of their own, these young people were struggling and had not had the advantages that many of them did now, I think through our partnerships with corporations and with government, you know, that's a much more common understanding and I think covenant house is really benefited from that.

Mark ([00:46:57](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=WWrsBj9jmpz0AtIRkiVFwOXixj7MG9pXsU4IqRgThjZ1eKfbJvOtGEMr1fk3QPRKiErtacAQrIz6wTIS68QkXwsHWh4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2817.4699999)):

Yeah. I think it's from a fundraising perspective too, it's made our job a, a tad easier, just because people, especially with CSR corporate social responsibility, they get it, you know, leading up to this point, oh, I think I don't want to sound cynical, but you know, quite often it was about the photo op and all that stuff, but now you're right. It's with the younger crowd coming up, part of their job interview is, well, what are you doing to give back to the community kind of thing, because they do indeed want to be a part of a company that is partnering for change. And so, that is very rewarding, especially, you know, for me and my team. And it's so nice to see it's, it's been a seismic shift, I think over in the time I've been here. And especially also with the general perception of the, the challenges that you face, you know, very different conversations on the phone just as you were alluding to there with the, in the early days. so very happy

Krista ([00:47:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=VMF_oPXWjAzOJJZaPGaFRifp3Akx2LEb78UxzU4lTMEfxwt_SuQHus08CsEROdAwv8BfF5AxreAtm4k96r4clX-B5vA&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2869.03)):

I'm very grateful for those business leaders who have really brought their hearts to this, you know, our Sleep Out movement. we invite, you know, senior business executives in, in many cases to come and spend the night with us. And uh, you know, when you've got those 50 people in a room, they leave their business suits behind and you could hear a, you could hear a pin drop in that room when a young person is sharing their experience and people genuinely bring their hearts to, to those events. And I think many of them have said that they're forever changed through that understanding of what a young person goes through and how brave they are, how smart they are and how funny they are and how spicy they are and, and, and sassy, and how they really, you know, are looking for a hand up, not a handout.

Mark ([00:48:41](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=92j9epL1NjkK2zErtjyVZLdrOqiUqHN0msTOjGsJTfHe93bAmoE3f72-eHj5dytHnRqpaKsKM5x3dqmyws7UtpE16I0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2921.92)):

Yeah.

Krista ([00:48:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=b3eY-JEgOWBt6U2WXsufPheuJQLhiivCPpmknAHRHTg3H2JLchdFzzwWksCnJ2PWqyqA60XJxJNuPizbcxaEfyKw9Uk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2922.56)):

It's really, it's quite, quite wonderful.

Mark ([00:48:45](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=prju1xEysEc8iBKymYi1KDPbZXdTUNB7yiUyHPLIR33SmCpmC-CeXg0s4GgbKsifnlJoNaYfTkGjF7fT4vdd7FnrcFM&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2925.23)):

Well, and that, I don't know if I'll quote it exactly right. But Kevin, Ryan of president of Covenant House International says, you know, he's always said his mantra is the least interesting thing about the youth we serve is that they're homeless. So they they're presenting with so many talents and so many smarts. And they, they do indeed just need that hand up and the, the sanctuary and security to, to become what they want to become. So, and it's so great to see the business community, seeing that and being genuinely caring and involved with that. So I've had the privilege of being involved with multiple sleep outs and I see it. So they, they really get it and they really want to be there and they really want to help. So yeah. and hopefully we're back to real, like no, no more virtual sleep outs. We'll see you with, we'll see come fall. Well, Krista, what is your proudest accomplishment during your time at Covenant House? I know that's a hard question, but I wanted to throw that out.

Krista ([00:49:42](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=mVCZmVWxS60pYPwj7HMloTReqktCcLQloUh4fiGTW-hakMltIxKWPsZqCx8VfhvzKOCE_g00hys3jBrEMwjwvXvRHC0&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=2982.28)):

Yeah. I mean, it's, it's, a little bit surreal, you know, looking, sitting here at 16 years later and it feels like it's gone by so quickly. And I think that, you know, we're as an organization, we're achievement oriented. I think when you're achievement oriented, you don't actually spend a lot of time looking backwards, probably should. But you know, we're always looking ahead to what the new challenge is, what the new problem is we want to solve and you know, and eager, eager to, to, to make changes and make a difference as we look forward. So, you know, I I'm, as we, as you and I are talking, you know, I'm, I'm starting to remember some of the things we, we had to do to, to, you know, slowly start to develop the expertise and the resources to be able to, to be the organization that we are today.

Krista ([00:50:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8e0s-dz9J9YXUgDJWU9yfHMrexGiK1KEGWYbtOti2WTYe72hhcYO05z6OlPqC6fG_vI0hFK6Q4O35lAlNzNUKOet1TI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3035.5)):

But I think that, I think that one of, you know, obviously bringing more young women on side is, on site has, was, has been a huge, I'm hugely proud of that. I'm very proud of, of development of mental health support that we, that we provide at Covenant House it's. Well, the first, I still remember the first day I came to work, it was in our, our old building. and, it was a tiny little building with a crappy old elevator and kind of smelled funny, but it was home. And I, I was introduced to some staff as I, you know, did my little walkabout with a board member or something. And one of the staff who's not here anymore, if she's listening to this, she'll know who she is, jumped into the elevator with me and literally like backed me up into the corner of the elevator and mean in a, in a cute way, with a big smile on her face.

Krista ([00:51:32](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YM5UXLO-pvcnda6DcqlT7fZjhsdEv6FP_t9y8gYsHVpxvTRMf3o3yQ7FiBBZM-_6_Yvg-_BexXqLBjCHUgI5GqIiGqY&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3092.85)):

And she said, now, listen, here's what you need to do. Krista, as the new CEO of Covenant House, you need to get more mental health support to our young people because we are, we are, we don't know enough about how to help these young people today. And I never forgot the conversation she was. And she, and, and in her, in her career, she's became a mental health clinician, of course, which is wonderful part of the story. But, I never forgot that. And it was patently obvious that we needed to do that. So again, bringing, bringing a, a really robust suite of mental health support to, to our young people on site has made, has made a big difference. And I'm very proud of that as well. Not easy to do. And, and, you know, it's not an easy thing to do, but we've done that.

Krista ([00:52:19](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ptAGXYkNPPfOGKQ320y-gg3eoY5ghOM0iqaJigscVfe-iNJQ5CHYDHU1P0PMHviuf_aO-JH-5c-svfyW0di1qM7PB4E&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3139.12)):

And we're just building on that Now. I've talked to countless young people who have benefited and say how much they benefited from those services. So I really very proud of that. you know, I think, I think collectively, you know, all of us in this room and in this organization should know that from the perspective of a veteran, you know, you mark year one after so many years, we touched on this, you know, the opportunity to elevate the young people to a place in the community where they're seen as special and worthy as a, as a, as a population is I think something we can be proud of as well. I mean, I think through our fundraising efforts, through our public affairs efforts, through our advocacy efforts, through our education efforts, we, I believe have, have helped the whole cause and movement for at-risk adolescents, move into a new place in people's hearts and minds and wallets in the city.

Krista ([00:53:29](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=RWq2dpdk21glQM6fYewFFjHd8u5YBN3bmGesKsCCcurRKtF-eFhBCG651dyh8fI57_9-ifj7KMfn6nLfykFnS20s6kk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3209.78)):

And I think government, business and nonprofits are talking about young people in a different way than when you and I first started. And I think Covenant House has played a role in that in the city. And for that, I'm very, very proud, also very proud of the people here, you know, I'm, I'm leaving my job, I'm after, you know, I'm, I'm, I'm at the age where I need to, to, you know, relinquish the reins to a younger leader who has, you know, who matches more the age of the young people working in this organization. and I, and I'm glad to be doing that. And I'm very grateful that Herb Eibensteiner has agreed to accept that challenge. We're very fortunate. He's been a big part of our success here over the years. but I, I want to say, you know, a leader is only as good as the people that she surrounds herself with, and I've been extremely fortunate to have an enormously talented, passionate, smart, driven, fun, caring group of people to work with. And, and that's from top to bottom in the agency. I don't care what job you're doing, whether you're a cook or you're a facilities person, you're fundraiser, a public affairs person, top to bottom in this organization throughout the organization, we have just, it's just a joy to work with people who have in common (?) passion and commitment and, and big, big hearts and a total privilege.

Mark ([00:54:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=Sr_Eo0c5MpnWv4KLoKo1DIvMuYGSyCfB9E9it3UqgDEKowbL6eeKj98eLcU903DYR4k66_EjB8NCEj8-6vCX7tknogI&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3299.84)):

I see it every day still when I'm in the office and I see it from every angle. And yeah, thanks for sharing that, guess, it's so it's, it's fascinating to see all the facets of a journey that's 16 years and that changing and the evolving for the good, so, and thank you so much for, for you leading the charge on that. And now looking to the future a little bit, what do you hope will be different for Covenant House and homeless young people as we move forward and looking into the future?

Krista ([00:55:35](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=9vibSBEQLnN-eFGZqvTs0bpB75uo-vYRAL4WYKyJnO667M4L7Igzvg9duHrp8kEBYr6UJ06rBd19wOXpZqUGernFvpk&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3335.9)):

Well, oh, there's so many things I'm excited about for the future. going back to the topic of brain science, you know, the more we understand about how we as humans evolve and develop physically, emotionally physiologically, mentally, the better we're going to get at supporting a young person who is struggling with particular challenges. And, we've already made great strides as a community with that. And I think we'll continue to do that. There'll be new medications, there'll be new ways of, of supporting a young person to transition out of addiction through science, through new medications, through understanding how we can find new treatment modalities. Many of which are being talked about today, and we're experimenting with a lot of different treatment modalities, in, in the addictions world driven, in large part by the, the absolute horrific tragedy of the opioid crisis. but I see looking forward that new models of care, new science-based, evidence-based treatment and support will, will make it a much, much bigger difference.

Krista ([00:56:49](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=LW_jQ-jdNygqASlk9yVS4_TwKDiMy1tHCYFlIsygUcnmOr6axXeH_j95v2miBUNYnXgrmU8bRhBLWPofuZrc2J_pMOw&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3409.4699999)):

I think over time, I think that the models of care that we're, that we are developing at Covenant House and at other Covenant House sites around the Americas, because don't forget we are an international aid agency headquartered in New York, but all over North America, Latin America, and, and two sites in Canada, you know, we are developing new models of care. We are breaking ground, in our, in, you know, our world on how to provide those new models of care and developing ways to scale up and, and spread the, the word around that. and I think, you know, I think that over time we have generations of young people who will be coming through programs like ours and who will literally turn the tide for their own families, their own children, their own cousins and friends who, through their health and their life changes and commitments, their own beauty will, you know, over time they'll solve the issues of homelessness and poverty through that work.

Mark ([00:58:10](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=ZBqOYJDTAvlNJmwRuPbwtPW2_4WDpISoVweP9fZ1pXwdHaGzDIKMs2Gx7dInvIS8W9xjd0bnNwvo2fXMGg2DMGQFXm8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3490.01)):

It it's. Yeah. It's and I, I see it's making you emotional and it it's, it's, it's so crucial though, when you look at again, we're talking about moving it upstream and, and breaking that cycle so that it stops with the youth that come and seek out our care. And then when they move on to greatness that,

Krista ([00:58:31](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=0D6Tm7Dc51JPA77tLajQ2m4oqYsIn2hCo1UTQGOO1cfZBwilziWQ5P-C05Fnjb-J7v71smySbQ_DYda4W3M34S6cXTs&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3511.54)):

I truly believe that Mark, I think, I think we see Covenant House as a, as a tool for social change. I think that if we can show up in the right place at the right time, in the arc of a young life, we can, we can make transformational change and not only for that young person, but also for generations to come. And, you know, I'm very excited about the future of Covenant House and for young people because of that. So thank you for the opportunity to talk about this, and I wish you all the very best

Mark ([00:59:02](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=8HqLYZwl8FPyyIZvkyEf7ufb3BrAYS0KNnt-bW4k3CsE9HSTt9urryPlPmtHF5MIVSHMd8I88c7YWs52xXlQpO29RuU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3542.91)):

Well, before I let you go. And, what's next for you, Krista. And, as you move into retirement, what,

Krista ([00:59:09](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=YRbDPUqI_81eqS_sIhmyEFOHTm44XZsgMl6xoImgqyiUzjr1kP4catbFGpCwv_xhW3r0KPx-ucKn4Vai9tLaDTiOnjc&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3549.11)):

Well I have, I have a, I have four wonderful daughters who also have children of their own. And so I have grandkids and, you know, of course, as I've said to people, I'm going to try to win the best grandparent in the world award. I like hanging out with them and having so much fun with my grandkids. and I, you know, I think that there's a garage and some junk drawers that need to be cleaned out. And I'm going to take some time. I'm going to take, you know, a few months, probably more than that to rest and, and I'm old. So I need some time to, you know, you know, get my exercise program back on track. And, and I, you know, I'm, I am excited about that and the ability to, to look at the world and from a slightly different perspective and, and continue to help my community in whatever way I can.

Mark ([01:00:00](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vVJQON118XebsqHaLfToJS8ltlfuVkDhFF-wXqOiyWc9fOuSDUQXHM3ZK4rGOUNuannExeMRZ31-VfSUcdfNoaTQLl4&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3600.17)):

Well, Krista it's, it's been such an honour and a pleasure to have this chat with you, and I wish you the best of everything as you move forward. And it's been such an honour to be with you, walk with you all along these 16 years, same amount of time and, best of luck and exploring all the new avenues that are, are there. It's, it's just a new chapter. I think. So that's exciting. I'm not that far behind you, but <laugh> a way to go.

Krista ([01:00:27](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=vm9ZRUZECayGBi1r9CENcamZwNmkPL7RybY8lEqb56ztj6ELAKkq3y4JFwsokXFYLeb6_L8Bh1cMCKfVPqE5b-F2Pr8&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3627.41)):

I’ll give you a call when you're ready. Go and, go have a, go have a walk and we'll talk about pension funds or something. <laugh>

Mark ([01:00:34](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=NVEGIg7RJGmblij7UIn23oE2Lycmd229jyavwGLG2s4DswWB30jnpN_R1yxhL2gxMax2ZVX1i5ALJhXwlhlv8ntep6k&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3634.72)):

Yeah, I'm starting to think about that. Yeah, well

Krista ([01:00:37](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=kbJTApVtPmPBdDblGF1s_Xc0eU-T9kjrY4YCBatbPNUb9oGFVuBrbAw85N25Qb8n4xOVGsMoN1icJpgixbmbxzztJ6A&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3637.56)):

<laugh> yeah, it's all good.

Mark ([01:00:38](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=pFlHl6YIBlK_1vYre-hH-_O6o5-Abbx-Q7y79OpjhGw3UsVkEj6w56uVVhnZeNnq4I0Ut0Vqa6M_GMKgS_lTBZTo_cU&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3638.79)):

Well, thank you so much, Krista. And that brings us to the end of this episode of Under One Roof. I'd like to thank my guest Krista Thompson for joining me. If you have feedback on today's episode or suggestions for future topics, please email us@publicaffairsatcovenanthousebc.org until next time, I'm mark Savard. Thanks for listening.

Announcer ([01:00:59](https://www.rev.com/transcript-editor/Edit?token=iMbfqc7busdoWmI0eKg5onP7Ybkc09VI01XIQeBsngiO0vSGnk8SSiZTqb7Y9Kve3MwEVkr4xZUYzKzV_NIB65MUI_w&loadFrom=DocumentDeeplink&ts=3659.77)):

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