



**Covenant  
House**  
Vancouver



Absolute Respect  
Relentless Support

# 25 Years of Relentlessly Supporting Young People

**2022 IMPACT REPORT**



## YOUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE



**96,720 meals**

OUR COOKS LOVINGLY PREPARED AND SERVED  
MORE THAN 96,720 MEALS, LAST YEAR



**85% of youth**

MAINTAINED OR IMPROVED THEIR MENTAL HEALTH



**264 youth**

ENTERED OUR CONTINUUM OF CARE BECAUSE  
OF STREET OUTREACH

## YOUR IMPACT AT A GLANCE



**121 youth**

AVERAGE NUMBER OF YOUNG PEOPLE  
SERVED DAILY



**91% of youth**

IMPROVED OR MAINTAINED THEIR HOUSING



**10,080 Drop-In Contacts**

YOUNG PEOPLE CONNECTED WITH OUR YOUTH  
WORKERS 10,080 TIMES AT OUR DROP-IN CENTRE

## Dear CHV Community,

I am thrilled to share our 2022 Impact Report with you, our caring Covenant House community.

As we look back on our last fiscal year, there are many things to be grateful for, not the least of which is the support of our donors and the commitment and resilience of our volunteers and staff. **I cannot overstate the extent to which our staff and volunteers have gone above and beyond in their absolute determination to achieve our goals that ensure that young people have the services they need to succeed.** Collectively, with our inspiring donors, these incredible efforts have ensured that CHV remained adaptable and unfaltering in its service to young people, this past year.

It was only three years ago that we celebrated the opening of the Phase One building at 1302 Seymour, and this summer, we celebrated the completion of our flagship building at 1280 Seymour. The vision and execution of this expansion have been carried out by many dedicated staff, volunteers, donors, and our community. With innovative new programs now possible in these facilities, we look to the future with hope and the goal of supporting more youth.

In a recent report, the BC Coroner's Service shared that the overdose crisis has worsened to record levels, in the last two years. From March 2021 to February 2022, there were 350 young lives lost in British Columbia—that's nearly one death per day. CHV is stepping in to create a low-barrier housing program (the Sanctuary program) that addresses the unique needs of youth in active addiction. The addition of this program will expand our existing continuum of care to reach youth who are currently slipping through the cracks due to a broken, unregulated system.

Last year, we shared a case study about our harm reduction pilot project. The findings in year one of the harm reduction pilot show promising results. They indicate that the provision of supplies supports increased engagement between youth and Covenant House, as well as improved management of substance use and engagement with cessation supports. The experience of offering harm reduction and the learning that has taken place serving the most complex youth will stand us in good stead, as we look ahead to the opening of the Sanctuary program. While we eagerly anticipate the opening of this program, funding is still in progress, and we are seeking support from various levels of government and our donor community.

In the coming year, we are mindful of emerging economic and social challenges, some as a result of the pandemic, that could impact both the demand for our services and our ability to meet that demand. We stand ready to meet these challenges with you by our side.

We never do this work alone. **I want to express my deepest gratitude to our donors, board members, partners, volunteers, and staff, for all you do to ensure that youth are supported relentlessly.** Thank you for standing with us and with young people for over 25 years, and thank you for continuing to fight to end youth homelessness with us!

With gratitude,



**TRACY BROWN,**  
Director, Philanthropy  
Covenant House Vancouver





## Our Purpose

### PURPOSE

Covenant House Vancouver is committed to serve all youth with relentless support, absolute respect, and unconditional love; to help youth experiencing homelessness; and to protect and safeguard all youth in need.

We offer a continuum of services using evidence-informed theories and practices that ensure they care for the entire person — mind, body, and spirit.

CHV uses a one-size-fits-one approach, tailored to the specific needs of each individual youth. This ensures that precise supports are made available to youth based on their respective journey, meeting each youth's unique and individual needs.

### VALUES

We incorporate the principles of Immediacy, Sanctuary, Value Communication, Structure, and Choice, in all aspects of our programs and services.

### APPROACH

Covenant House Vancouver is a trauma-informed agency. As such, we hold an awareness that the youth who come to us may have been impacted by various forms of trauma and believe that trauma can be both a cause and a product of homelessness.

# Our Programs and Services

## OUTREACH AND DROP-IN

The Outreach Team seeks out young people living on the streets, in Single Room Occupancy Units (SROs), or those at risk of becoming homeless.

The Outreach Team builds trust with the youth, sharing about our other services like our Drop-In Centre where they can get something to eat, have a shower, and do their laundry, all while receiving support from caring staff and volunteers.



## CRISIS PROGRAM

Our Crisis Program offers safe housing, food, clothing, and counselling to young people aged 16–24. We take care of their immediate needs first, which are often food and rest. We encourage and work with youth to create their own plan for independence and we support them every step of the way.



## RIGHTS OF PASSAGE (ROP)

Rights of Passage (ROP) is a longer-term transitional living program for young people who need housing, structure, and support as they strive toward independence. Critical life skills that many of us take for granted such as budgeting, cooking, cleaning, and goal setting, are taught while youth attend work and/or further their education.



## WHOLE-PERSON CARE

Young people who are at risk of, or who are experiencing homelessness, or those who have experienced human trafficking have complex needs that require whole-person care. Complex care is a person-centered approach that addresses the needs of people whose overlapping mental health, substance use, trauma, medical health, and other challenges, require coordinated and specialized support.



Housing Support Workers, Life Skills Workers, Social Workers and Registered Clinical Counsellors are available for all youth in all our programs. All our services are offered with genuine compassion and acceptance, with the knowledge that trust is the foundation for a successful way forward and away from the trauma of the streets.



## 25 Years of Improving Outcomes for Youth

**OVER THE COURSE** of 25 years, Covenant House Vancouver (CHV) has grown in size, depth, and breadth of services that we offer. We now understand that when youth have access to support that goes beyond shelter, food, and other basics, their lives post-CHV are drastically better and more stable. Over time, we've worked hard to enhance what we offer and tailor our services to what youth experiencing homelessness truly need to lead rich, fulfilling lives, once they leave our care. On the following pages you'll find examples of milestones in our service delivery that we're most proud of.

# 1997



### Covenant House Vancouver opens

12 beds are available for youth experiencing homelessness.

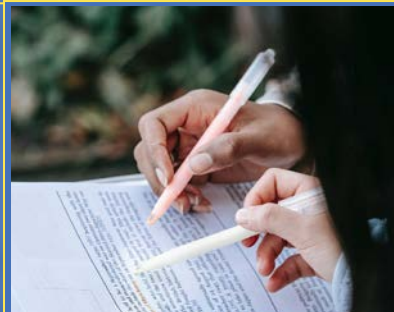
### Rights of Passage (ROP) opens at 326 Pender St.

CHV opens ROP, a more structured housing program for youth who wish to improve their life skills and transition to independent living.



# 2002

# 2012



### We hire our first life skills coordinator

Life skills like budgeting, meal planning, resume writing and other essentials become part of what youth learn when they stay with us.

### We hire our first social worker

From this point on, each youth at CHV has their own dedicated social worker.



# 2008

# 2007



### Mental health & addiction services are introduced

CHV conducts a pilot project with what will eventually become the Foundry to offer mental health and addictions counselling to youth in our care, and educate youth workers about mental health support.

## The female-identified Crisis Program opens

Female-identified youth now have a space to feel safe. Occupancy is growing quickly, as news of the program spreads.

*Previously, both male-identified and female-identified youth were housed together.*



2014

2022



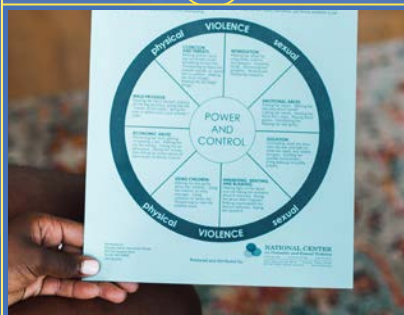
Unconditional Love  
25 YEARS

Absolute Respect  
Relentless Support

## 1280 Seymour opens

The new building allows us to drastically increase our services by offering enhanced art and recreation programming, counselling and therapy, and educational support.

2015



## Introduction of trauma-informed care

Trauma is recognized to be an almost universal experience of youth experiencing homelessness. At Covenant House, we begin to train staff and adapt our practices to avoid re-traumatizing youth, and to help them heal.

## First survivor leadership position

The Anti-Human Trafficking Department hires a staff member with lived experience of trafficking, to help shape our approach to youth who have been trafficked.



2021

## Harm reduction pilot

In response to the devastation of the opioid crisis, CHV begins providing harm reduction kits to youth, and naloxone and other addiction-specific training to frontline staff.



2021

2021



## Ethical storytelling

With guidance from Covenant House International, we implement new ethical storytelling standards, to ensure that we are speaking about the young people at CHV in a way that is respectful and empowering.

## CASE STUDY

# Human Trafficking

## Defining Human Trafficking

Human trafficking (sex, labour, and organ trafficking) involves recruiting, transporting, harbouring, or receiving a person, through the use of force, fraud, or coercion, for the purpose of exploitation. In the case of minors, any commercial sex act is trafficking, regardless of whether force, fraud, or coercion is involved. Exploitation can occur without trafficking.

## How Covenant House Vancouver is working with young people who are at risk of, or have experienced, Human Trafficking

Covenant House Vancouver is engaged in a 32-month project that will develop and implement intervention practices that will advance knowledge and enhance empowerment supports for youth ages 16 to 24, who are at risk of, or are survivors of, exploitation and human trafficking, in Vancouver.

This will be achieved by researching, drafting, distributing, and evaluating a practice guide, tool kit, and training model, to support frontline staff and community partners, which will provide empowerment supports for trafficked youth.

## At the end of the project:

- CHV will have strengthened policies and practices with respect to human trafficking and exploitation of youth.
- CHV staff will be fully trained and supported to implement best practices.
- The tool kit generated by the project will be shared at a training session for community partners.
- The project will include an external evaluation that will look at the success and scalability of the promising practices.

We look forward to sharing stories and more about our human trafficking work in the coming year.

*This project has been funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.*



Women and Gender  
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité  
des genres Canada





## Dani Explores Art Therapy at CHV

**WE SAT DOWN** with Dr. Keith, Clinical Counsellor at CHV, to discuss the benefits of art therapy and how it can be used to help youth overcome trauma. To respect the privacy of the youth in our care, Dani is not one individual youth, but their story represents multiple youth stories.

**DANI LEARNED ABOUT** Covenant House Vancouver (CHV) through an encounter with an Outreach team member, who provided them with food and some information on CHV's programs and services. Dani was anxious about coming to CHV, but was understandably not coping well with living on the street.

During the intake session, Dani only shared some basic information with the youth worker, and was fairly tight lipped during their one-on-one sessions. As Dani settled into the structured life at CHV, they began to participate in some of the services and programs offered.

One Monday, Dani decided to check out the Open Studio in the art therapy space. The art therapist running the session welcomed Dani and provided them with some art supplies. The art therapist asked if they could sit near Dani. Dani agreed, and the two of them drew. "Don't take my silence personally," said Dani. "I'm like this with everyone."

Dani reached for some paints to add some colour to what they had drawn. Towards the end of the Open Studio session, the art therapist turned to Dani and said, "How about we stick our art up on the wall, take a step back, and see what we've created. I'll go first." After describing the shapes and colours and what they were trying to express, the therapist then turned to Dani. "Now, what would you like to share with me about what you've created?"

Dani paused, took a deep breath and said, "I'm not a very good artist. I guess that's me towards the right of the drawing. I didn't know what to draw, so I drew myself doing something. My parents told me that I was quite self-absorbed."

"I think that's okay," stated the art therapist. "You're young and your brain is still developing. You're at the age where you no longer see things as black

or white. You are questioning things, you are forming your own opinions and recognizing subtleties and grey areas. I assure you that you are where you are supposed to be."

Dani smiled.

"I see that you've used some very strong tones of colour on your piece. It really pops!" Said the art therapist.

"I got a little frustrated with my picture, and I guess a bit angry, so I used the 'loud' colours," said Dani.



**"Dani began sharing more and more about their personal life in these studio sessions."**

Dani joined the Open Studios as well as some more structured, closed art therapy sessions on a regular basis. Dani began sharing more and more about their personal life in these studio sessions. It was far less intimidating than sitting across from someone older and just answering their questions.

The art therapist asked Dani how things were in their day-to-day life. Dani replied, "Well, I have a really hard time concentrating on things, you know? Like when I'm in class or something. In fact, I dropped out of school. Why do you ask?"

The art therapist explained that when dealing with trauma, the first stage is to develop ways to manage how you're feeling and reacting in present day situations. Ways like being more mindful of your thoughts, or alternatives to using alcohol, drugs, or food-related habits to manage difficult memories or emotions; or by learning how to express yourself in a way that doesn't feel overwhelming to yourself or anybody else. "There's no point diving into the past, if the present is just chaos."

Over time, Dani began to share what their childhood was like. When asked if Dani thought that the experiences were traumatic, Dani answered, "I don't know. It was just how things were. I thought that's how things were supposed to be."

The art therapist explained to Dani that when trauma happens at a young age, where children don't have the words to express what they're feeling, experi-



ences may be quite traumatic and that this trauma memory gets stored in the body as feelings and sensations. This is why expressive arts therapies can be so useful — because they engage the body as well as the mind and allow the trauma to be expressed externally.

If youth want to explore the trauma from the past (not all do and sometimes it's not necessary) that is the second stage of dealing with, and healing from, trauma. Through art therapy and other counselling, youth can begin to connect how events from the past are linked to behaviours of the present.

Dani worked hard on finding positive ways to approach situations, to cope, and to collaborate with others. Dani made sleep one of their priorities, along with daily routines, eating well and exercise.

Eventually, Dani was ready to move to the third stage of healing — creating the life that they want for themselves. One day, during a counselling session,



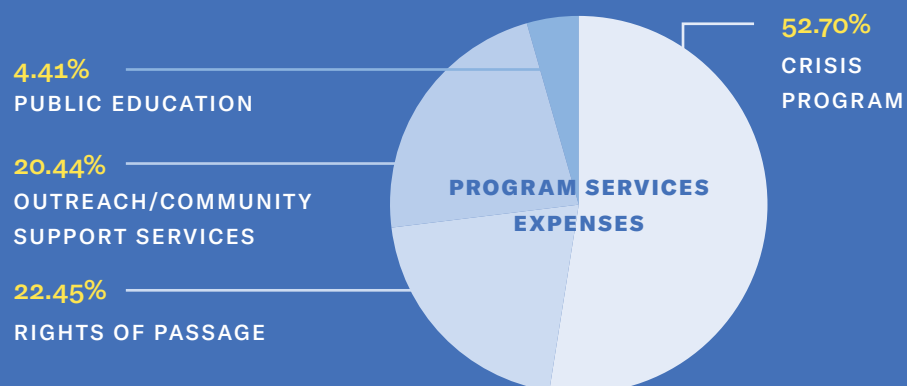
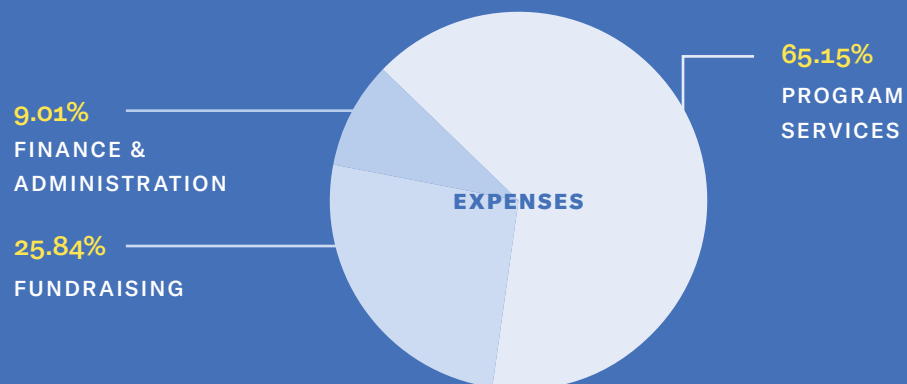
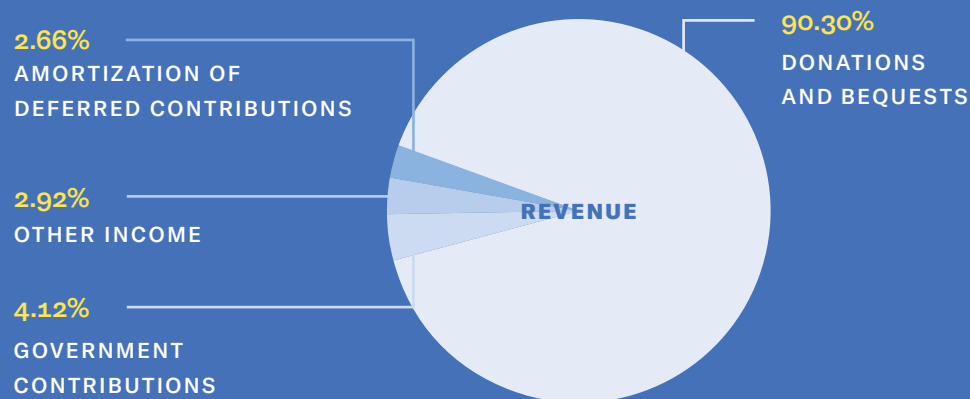
**"Every youth is unique and requires a trauma-informed approach tailored to their specific needs."**

Dani announced, "I would like to go back to school!" to which the art therapist enthusiastically replied, "Excellent! Let's map out how that process might look."

Art therapy is only one aspect of the holistic approach to healing that we take at Covenant House Vancouver. Every youth is unique and requires a trauma-informed approach tailored to their specific needs. Art therapy has been found to be extremely useful in helping youth to connect to their feelings and begin their journey towards healing. We are very grateful for the new art therapy space at 1280 Seymour Street, and to our community of supporters who made it possible. We see the positive impacts from this program on a daily basis, and witness young people finding new ways to safely share their journeys.

# The Impact of Your Generosity

Complete audited financial statements are available by request by calling 604-638-4438, or online at [www.covenanthousebc.org](http://www.covenanthousebc.org).



## Board of Directors

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Senior Staff are listed online at [www.covenanthousebc.org](http://www.covenanthousebc.org).

**Thank you for being such a valued  
member of the Covenant House  
Vancouver community!**



1280 Seymour Street

Vancouver, BC V6B 3N9

[www.covenanthousebc.org](http://www.covenanthousebc.org)

Tel: (604) 638-GIFT (4438)

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