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2023 ISSUE**

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Covenant House News



“Thanks to the steadfast backing of compassionate donors, CHV is dedicated to bridging the gaps within our community.”

READ THE FULL STORY ON PAGE 4 →





Bryan and Kim James Step up for Youth

Our Triple Match Campaign is made possible by the generous support of Bryan and Kim James who are providing \$100,000 in matching funds.

Any donation you make will have three times the impact and will go even further in helping to create a better future for youth in need, but only until December 31st.

Bryan and Kim James know how many young people out there need help, which is why they started donating to Covenant House Vancouver when they moved here, a few years ago. They know that there are a lot of gaps in the system that young people are falling through, making it hard for them to succeed in life. “If everyone would support places like Covenant House Vancouver, it would give people a chance to make that change.” Said Kim.

“We are delighted to witness the continuous improvements taking place at Covenant House Vancouver and to learn about the upcoming initiatives that help improve the lives of youth. We eagerly

look forward to engaging in our second donor match campaign.” Said Bryan.

Both are thrilled to be involved, for their second year, as the winter matching

“If everyone would support places like Covenant House Vancouver, it would give people a chance to make that change.”

KIM JAMES

donors. They’re excited to contribute and witness the positive impact of their support firsthand. Please know that even a small amount can make a big difference and your donation will go three times as far in helping young people in our community find a place to call home.

Give Hope for the Holidays

With the support of our donor community, we work hard to make the holiday season special for young people who are experiencing homelessness.



You can help make the holidays brighter for young people by donating needed items to our holiday backpacks, by helping with seasonal outings, or by providing gift cards or monetary donations.

Please note, we are looking for specific items during the holiday season. **For more information, including a list of our most needed items, please call or email:**

CORY KABAN

Philanthropy Officer, Gifts-in-Kind
ckaban@covenanthousebc.org
604-757-6064

Join the Sleep Out Movement

This year, unite with thousands of others who are giving up their beds for one night and sleeping out. By raising funds and awareness, you are joining the Sleep Out movement to ensure that vulnerable young people in our community have a safe place to sleep every night.

If you have questions about a specific Sleep Out, or want to learn more, please visit www.sleepoutvancouver.org, or contact:

KIM WING

Manager, Special Events
sleepout@covenanthousebc.org
604-901-0183

EVENT NAME	EVENT DATE
Sleep Out: Executive Edition	November 16, 2023
Sleep Out: Champions Edition	February 29, 2024
Sleep Out: Student Edition	Any time throughout the school year



The Stark Reality of the Housing Affordability Crisis

Housing affordability is increasingly out of reach for many young people in our community.

Rental prices are at a record high, with Canada now having the priciest housing market among G7 countries (OECD). In Metro Vancouver, competition for rentals has surged, leaving numerous young individuals struggling to secure stable homes. The average monthly cost of a one-bedroom apartment in Metro Vancouver is \$2,406, rising to \$2,849 in the City of Vancouver. Most young individuals pay over \$1,000 monthly to live in shared accommodations.

The core issue is the scarcity of affordable housing units. This shortage forces many youth to stay longer at Covenant House Vancouver (CHV) due to limited independent housing options. Insufficient beds at CHV have led to

vulnerable individuals being turned away, intensifying the crisis.

Government supports, such as income assistance and disability benefits, fall short of bridging the gap between youth needs and rent costs. The difference between these inadequate resources and the actual cost of living only deepens the struggles faced by those we are committed to assisting.

ADDITIONAL BARRIERS FOR YOUTH EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The young people that CHV works with face a plethora of challenges outside of the cost of living, such as mental health challenges, growing up in foster care, and discrimination based on race, age, gender

identity, sexual orientation, ability, and ethnicity.

Landlords often do not wish to rent to youth who lack essential life skills, an employment history, or references. The absence of a supportive family or community network further compounds their difficulties, leaving them particularly vulnerable in the face of this housing crisis.

Despite these challenges, rays of hope and progress are emerging. Thanks to the steadfast backing of compassionate

donors, CHV is dedicated to bridging the gaps within our community. Whether it's the incorporation of more than 20 new self-contained living spaces in our Rights of Passage program, our commitment to supporting youth in securing and maintaining housing within the community, or our emerging role in advocating for essential policy changes — CHV stands unwaveringly by the side of youth on every step of their journeys. Read more about how CHV supports youth from a one-size-fits-one approach on page 8.

Did you know?



96

The average length of stay in the Crisis Program is 96 days (almost double pre-pandemic)



610

The maximum amount an individual can receive per month from income assistance is \$610



983.50

The maximum amount an individual can receive per month from disability assistance is \$983.50



2,030

A person who works full-time, making minimum wage in B.C., takes home approximately \$2,030 per month



YOUTH STORY

Covenant House Vancouver Was Always There for Me

Stephen is an amicable young man who always worked, had a roof over his head, and supported those less fortunate than himself.

He had always been fiercely independent and didn't like to ask for help.

Stephen lived with his parents in Prince George until they decided to move to Vancouver Island, and Stephen decided to move to Vancouver with his friend. Shortly after moving to Vancouver, Stephen's friend was arrested and taken to jail. Renting a hotel room alone, Stephen quickly burned through his money. "I'd never been homeless, until Vancouver."

Stephen discovered CHV, and during his intake, was asked about his substance use. He admitted that occasionally he used alcohol and cannabis, but that he was working on quitting.

Stephen came to CHV during the pandemic and had to spend the first 14 days in isolation. Although he felt comfortable at CHV, the isolation got to him, and Stephen decided to leave. A couple of days later, he realized that he had made a mistake and came back.

After a month at CHV, Stephen found a job and a place to live.

However, Stephen's friend was released from jail and he found himself caught in an unhealthy cycle — he would find a place to live, his friend would move in, and Stephen would soon lose his apartment. "I have a thing about helping people who are not necessarily good for me. My best friend is addicted to opiates

and that's who I kept letting back into my life. He would always ruin it for me."

Stephen was using alcohol and cannabis more, but he always returned to CHV. "They were always open for me to come back."

"If I took a step back and then I looked at my life, I'd be like, how did this happen?"

Stephen began accepting help from CHV, including letting staff give him rides to appointments, and receiving support to earn his Traffic Control Person certification and WHMIS certification.

"I ended up talking with CHV staff and they helped me get into treatment and into detox. And that was a big step for sure." Stephen then stayed at CHV for his longest duration ever.

Stephen is now living independently in a micro-suite, and his life has improved dramatically. Building a routine, he comes to CHV every day for meals, he accesses Covey's Cupboard, a pantry at CHV stocked with healthy non-perishables, to help him with his weekly groceries, and he uses the clothing room. CHV has also helped Stephen learn about setting boundaries with his friends, and the youth workers support his decisions to stay focused on his goals.

Through Vancouver Coastal Health, Stephen is studying to be a peer support worker. "A couple of years ago, I wouldn't have imagined that I would have a career; that I would become a support worker

and help people. I'm learning how to help somebody that's homeless or struggling with addiction. I've experienced a lot of what we're learning, but now I'm understanding why I've done those things." When the course is finished, Stephen will be placed in a practicum and then will receive his certification.

Stephen has also been able to help his friend. "I was able to get him into his own

"It's like Covenant House has just been there for me to get my grounding and get my head in order. No other place is close to being this helpful, this good."

STEPHEN
COVENANT HOUSE VANCOUVER

place. I got him where he needed to be so that he could get help. Far enough away from me, because I'm not going to risk losing my place again."

"I got places I could be, but I choose to come here. They want me to do good and not veer off into trouble. It's like Covenant House has just been there for me to get my grounding and get my head in order. No other place is close to being this helpful, this good."

The name of the young person in this story was changed to protect their privacy.



How Covenant House Vancouver Helps

In the face of a growing housing crisis, CHV is committed to addressing the issue head-on by going beyond basic shelter support and equipping young individuals with essential life skills, counselling, education, and employment readiness to thrive independently.

Navigating the path toward independent living is a difficult journey. CHV recognizes these challenges and has developed a wraparound approach to ensure that young people find and maintain housing. Our key initiatives include our innovative supportive housing programs: the Crisis Program, Rights of Passage (ROP) program, and our partnership with Hollyburn Properties.

CRISIS PROGRAM: With a capacity of 60 beds, the Crisis Program plays a pivotal role in catering to the immediate needs of youth who have found themselves living, or at risk of living, on Vancouver’s streets. This program offers a safe haven for those in dire situations, allowing youth to find temporary refuge, while they work towards their long-term goals. The Crisis Program acts as a bridge to

ensure that these young individuals are not left without support during their transition to stability.

RIGHTS OF PASSAGE: Our supportive independent living program, ROP, is expanding and after the winter 2024 renovation of our Pender building, we’ll be welcoming up to 44 youth. ROP’s self-contained units offer not only a home, but a community, where youth can experience autonomy and security that will provide a nurturing environment for them to work on their educational pursuits, career aspirations, health and wellness. Our dedicated youth workers and social workers are available 24/7, standing as pillars of unwavering support.

HOLLYBURN PROPERTIES: In addition to our on-site program, CHV partners with Hollyburn Properties to offer three

fully-furnished apartments to ROP program youth. Youth can live in a Hollyburn suite for up to 12 months, with ongoing support from CHV, and practice skills like how to apply for an apartment, manage rent, communicate with the building manager, and for the most part, live independently. Rent paid by youth is returned as a nest egg for their next residence.

All youth in our programs, plus those using our Drop-In Centre and Outreach services, access recreation, art therapy, counselling, case management, and life skills support. CHV offers diverse housing-focused services, from readiness assessments to landlord interactions,

guided by dedicated housing workers, life skills workers, and community transition workers.

CHV’s commitment goes beyond providing shelter. It’s a holistic approach that addresses the full spectrum of a young person’s needs. From enhancing life skills to fostering education and employment readiness, we empower youth with the tools they need to thrive independently.

In a world with pressing housing instability, CHV remains dedicated to providing comprehensive support and building a brighter future for young people in need.

Did you know?



80%

80% of youth improved or maintained their capacity to manage housing



100%

100% of youth who moved out of ROP last year moved to a stable setting



96%

96% of youth say “Covenant House has helped me”

A Tax Savvy Way of Giving

If you are looking for a unique way to donate to Covenant House Vancouver, while helping to reduce your taxes, consider a gift of stocks or securities.

DID YOU KNOW: 100% of your gift supports our work with youth in the community. It is not subject to brokerage fees.

Contact us to get a copy of our transfer form or visit our website to download a copy. Complete the form and give a copy to us and one to your broker. No other action is required by you.

Be sure that your broker does not sell the securities before transferring them. Securities must be donated in-kind to qualify for a reduction in capital gains tax.



For more information, please contact:

CELIA CAMPOS

Manager, Legacy Giving

ccampos@covenanthousebc.org

604-757-6068

Make a Will for Free!

Having an up-to-date Will gives you peace of mind and is your way of making a lasting impact on the world around you. It helps you provide for your loved ones and the causes that matter most to you.

Covenant House Vancouver has partnered with Willfora, a FREE resource to help make creating or updating a Will easier than ever. Willfora allows you to

create a legal Will online in 20 minutes or less, at no cost to you.

If you would like to participate in this program or learn more contact:

CELIA CAMPOS

Manager, Legacy Giving

ccampos@covenanthousebc.org

604-757-6068

“As we look to the future, we’re certain of one thing: we cannot solve the housing crisis alone. The power of partnership — of likeminded souls uniting for a common cause — must be harnessed to provide youth with the housing and homes they deserve. Thank you for partnering with us in this essential mission.”

DEB LESTER

CEO, COVENANT HOUSE VANCOUVER



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