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Covenant House Vancouver News



**Covenant
House
Vancouver**

“There is a greater
demand for services,
with more complex
community needs.”

MÉLANIE HENNESSEY

BOARD CHAIR,
COVENANT HOUSE VANCOUVER





Covenant House Vancouver recognizes the ongoing impacts of colonization and is committed to advancing reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples in all the work we do. We acknowledge, with gratitude, that our work takes place on the ancestral and unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and sə́ɫwətaʔɫ (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

FROM MAY 4-JUNE 30, YOUR GIFT WILL BE DOUBLED!

That means your gift will go twice as far in providing one-of-a-kind supports and stable housing for youth in crisis.

Our Double Match Campaign is made possible by the Wubs Family Foundation, which will match every dollar, up to \$100,000. Established in 2023, they are dedicated to creating meaningful change in homelessness and mental health.

We are deeply grateful to the Wubs Family Foundation for being our match partner and helping us provide vital services to youth in our community.



Scan the QR code to donate today or visit:
covenanthousebc.org

“Youth homelessness is a pressing issue in the Lower Mainland, and we feel a strong responsibility to act. We are honoured to support the vital work being done to provide a safe haven for vulnerable youth.”

WUBS FAMILY FOUNDATION



WUBS FAMILY
FOUNDATION

PROVIDING CARE FOR NEURODIVERGENT YOUTH

In recent years, Covenant House Vancouver has welcomed more youth who show signs of neurodivergence, such as autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

According to Statistics Canada (2020), “ASD has the highest unemployment rate of all disabilities — 80%.” Also, according to CMHC (2020), people with autism “are increasingly at risk for food and shelter insecurity and homelessness.”

Someone with neurodivergence may have sensory sensitivity, have challenges interacting socially, or may learn differently. It can affect their attention, communication, and how they experience the world. We see the impact of these challenges, every day. Some neurodivergent youth struggle to be in communal spaces and often avoid group settings. Many miss appointments despite reminders, and later express frustration or shame about not being able to follow through. Staff frequently see





We work hard to get youth diagnosed and, in the interim, we provide immediate, tailored support, flexible appointments, and strategies that respect sensory needs.

youth return from treatment programs after being discharged for “not meeting expectations,” despite trying their best. For many youth, these barriers feel impossible to overcome.

Getting diagnosed is extremely difficult. In BC, assessments for autism or ADHD require specialist referrals, with waitlists that are longer than a year, and that cost thousands of dollars in private fees. By receiving a diagnosis, it gives youth more access to financial supports and

housing opportunities. It also gives youth clarity and tools to adjust their behaviour, by having an understanding of how they respond.

We work hard to get youth diagnosed and, in the interim, we provide immediate, tailored support, flexible appointments, and strategies that respect sensory needs. Our team also helps youth navigate systems, by connecting them to specialists, advocating for faster referrals, and, sometimes, by simply starting the conversation that there may be something deeper going on. These steps can be life changing and can open doors to the right care.

References:

1. [https://connective.ca/blog/autism-spectrum-disorder-supports/#:~:text=Barriers%20to%20Employment,What%20is%20the%20HSSIDIP%3F\).](https://connective.ca/blog/autism-spectrum-disorder-supports/#:~:text=Barriers%20to%20Employment,What%20is%20the%20HSSIDIP%3F))
2. Canadian Housing Mortgage Corporation: https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/nhs_nhs-project-profiles/2020-nhs-projects/housing-through-an-autism-lens



OUR WORK

ANTI-HUMAN TRAFFICKING: MEETING YOUTH NEEDS

The population we serve is vulnerable to human trafficking and the predators that aim to exploit them.

Human trafficking involves the recruiting, harbouring, and/or controlling of a person for the purpose of exploitation — in Canada, the most common forms are labour and sexual exploitation.

ABOUT HUMAN TRAFFICKING

In Canada, from 2014 to 2024*:

- **Just over 5,000** incidents of human trafficking have been reported to police
- **93%** of victims of police-reported human trafficking were women and girls
- **22%** of victims of police-reported human trafficking were age 17 and younger, **41%** between 18 and 24, and **24%** between 25 and 34
- **34%** were trafficked by an intimate partner

WHAT LEADS TO HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Youth, women, and marginalized communities are the most at risk of exploitation, for many reasons:

- **Poverty:** when a person is desperate, they are most likely to take on questionable jobs and be lured by promises of food, shelter, or money.
- **Displacement:** children displaced by armed conflicts, natural disasters, and climate-driven emergencies may have lost family and are unprotected.
- **Supply and Demand:** a persistent demand for cheap labour and sexual exploitation creates conditions in which traffickers attempt to meet the market, by exploiting vulnerable people. As long as this demand exists, the risk of trafficking remains high.

YOUTH STORY: MATEO

Mateo* was a hardworking, single father. He struggled to find work and care for his daughter. Dreaming of a better life, he connected with an immigration agent who got him a job in Canada.

Mateo landed in Alberta, where he was met by a man who led him to an old school bus that was filled with other newcomers, to take them to a farm. At this point, they took his passport, stating it was needed for “paperwork.” It was never returned.



Labour Trafficking

Labour trafficking involves recruiting, moving, or holding victims and/or their identification to coerce them into doing work. Migrant workers and newcomers to Canada can be at a higher risk, due to their immigration status, language barriers, and understanding of local labour laws. Often, job offers are very appealing, but when workers arrive, they can be threatened with deportation, have their identification taken away, live in unhealthy conditions, and be physically threatened.



At the farm, Mateo lived in a small trailer with two other men, with old sleeping bags for bedding. The floor was littered with rodent droppings. The work consisted of long days in the field, insufficient rations, and intimidating threats. Things changed when the tractor operator was beaten, in front of the other workers, for taking too long to refuel the tractor. Mateo needed to escape. He ran away with his roommates and made his way towards Vancouver, far from the farm.

Our Work

CHV provides programs to ensure that we can best serve human trafficking survivors. We are members of the Human Trafficking Prevention Network, where we connect with other organizations, to influence and impact policy around human trafficking.

We also are dedicated to raising awareness, and increasing knowledge about human trafficking and exploitation, to better support youth who are at risk of, experiencing, or survivors of, human trafficking. To support organizations and provide detailed information about human trafficking, we developed a toolkit, *Pivoting Practice: Building Capacity to Serve Youth Impacted by Trafficking*. Donors and supporters are why we are able to do all this work and make a difference in the lives of youth who have experienced trafficking.

In Vancouver, Mateo arrived with nothing but hope. He found his way to Covenant House Vancouver, where he was greeted with compassion, warmth, and safety. After a brief intake, Mateo was offered a bed in our Crisis Program. When he was ready, Mateo was shown around CHV's facilities and introduced to his social worker. CHV also connected Mateo to the Vancouver Police Department's Human Trafficking Unit, so that he could report his experiences in Alberta and provide information about the agents who were behind the labour trafficking. CHV also supported Mateo with his refugee application, seeking employment, learning English, settling in his new community, and reconnecting with his daughter.

**Note: This is a composite story that reflects the experiences of multiple youth, while protecting individual privacy.*

References:

<https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2025001/article/00008-eng.htm>
<https://www.unicefusa.org/stories/what-fuels-human-trafficking>

MAKE A LASTING IMPACT THROUGH LEGACY GIVING

You have the power to shape brighter futures for young people at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness.

By including a gift to Covenant House Vancouver in your will, you create a legacy rooted in hope, dignity, and long-term transformation.

A legacy gift in your will:

- Supports the causes that matter most to you
- Provides a meaningful way to express your values for generations to come
- Helps equip young people with the care, stability, and opportunities they deserve
- Plants the seeds for a future where all youth can thrive

Leaving a legacy gift is a thoughtful and impactful way to ensure that vulnerable moments in young people's lives are met with compassion, safety, and unwavering support. No matter the size, your gift becomes part of a lasting foundation that helps youth move toward independence, healing, and possibility.

For more information on legacy gifts, please contact:

CELIA CAMPOS

LEGACY GIVING MANAGER

604-757-6068 | ccampos@covenanthousebc.org.

Thank you for your enduring dedication to young people and your belief in their potential.



Over the past decade, we've seen a downward trend in charitable giving, in Canada.¹ At the same time, there is a greater demand for services, with more complex community needs.²

Our donors continue to step up. Over 80% of our funding comes from private sources, including donors like you. This allows us to respond to the needs of youth.”

MÉLANIE HENNESSEY

BOARD CHAIR, COVENANT HOUSE VANCOUVER

References:

1. <https://www.fraserinstitute.org/sites/default/files/2025-12/generosity-in-canada-2025-generosity-index.pdf>
2. *Stretched Thin: 2025 State of BC's Non-Profit Sector Report from Vantage Point*