



2019

**Impact
Report**



**Covenant
House**
VANCOUVER



About Us

Covenant House Vancouver opened in 1997 in response to an overwhelming need for residential and support services for homeless and at-risk youth.

We are primarily privately funded (95%) and supported by

180 employees

140 volunteers and

50,000 donors.



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2019 at a Glance

We helped
130 youth
per day

Served
1,037
individual
youth

742
youth
accessed our
Drop-In Centre

419 youth
stayed in our
Crisis Program

447
youth
connected
with our
Outreach Staff

43
young people
participated in our
Rights of Passage
Program

Dear Friends

It is an exciting time at Covenant House Vancouver. We were thrilled to celebrate the completion of Phase One of our capital expansion project at 1302 Seymour St. Our Community Support Services (CSS) and female-identified Crisis Program moved into the custom-designed building. The young people love their new spaces. Bright and open, the new building was crafted with incredible care and demonstrates to youth that they are worthy of safe and welcoming surroundings.

Phase Two of our plan to expand services for young people

continues with the demolition of our 575 Drake St. building, and construction of its replacement will begin soon. When complete, our new 10-storey building will include more beds for youth, as well as health and wellness spaces, art therapy & music rooms, and classrooms. We are so excited to be able to offer even more wrap-around program services for each unique young person that comes through our doors.

None of what we have accomplished with our Capital Campaign or our day-to-day operations would be possible without the incredible support

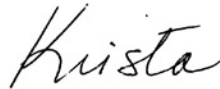


of you, our donors. In the past year, your generosity and commitment helped youth like Sally, who had the courage to escape from the people who were trafficking her, and Ryan, who worked so hard to overcome his personal challenges and told us, "You gave me my life back." Their stories and other highlights of the past year are included in this Impact Report.

I look forward to the year ahead, knowing we have the solid support from our donor community. Your commitment to Covenant House Vancouver fills us with pride and provides encouragement to our young people, staff, volunteers

and Board of Directors. On their behalf, I thank you for your confidence in us and your continued support. Together, we will continue providing the best care for all the young people who call Covenant House Vancouver home.

With love and respect,



Krista Thompson
Chief Executive Officer





Our New Building

In 2017, we faced a challenge: the number of youth experiencing homelessness was rising, and we simply didn't have the space to accommodate them. We launched an ambitious expansion project to better serve these young people, and we're thrilled to announce the results of that effort. Welcome to 1302 Seymour St. It's a brand new, 5-storey facility, located just across the street from our location on Drake & Seymour.



Asked and answered

When our team was planning the space, we spent months talking to youth, gathering their experiences, insight and feedback. We took their words to heart, and it shows.

- We have expanded our Drop-In services to include a laundry room and showers
- Both our Drop-In Centre and our female-identified Crisis Program now have a private outdoor area so youth can get fresh air in a safe and private space

- Every youth in the Crisis Program has their own bedroom, complete with a private bathroom and shower. The young people feel that having their own washroom gives them a renewed sense of privacy, dignity and self-worth.

Continuum of Care

Each of our services are offered with genuine compassion and acceptance, with the understanding that trust is the foundation upon which we can help our youth build a new path away from the trauma of the streets. It adds up to a continuum of care.

Our carefully designed continuum of care model, or “one-stop shop,” for youth in crisis comprises three programs: Street Outreach and Drop-In, Crisis, and Rights of Passage. Each program includes ongoing support from an Integrated Case Management team, who are all certified Social Workers.



Street Outreach & Drop-in

The Outreach Team seeks out young people living on the streets, in single room occupancies, or those at-risk of becoming homeless. The Outreach Team is the “face” of Covenant House Vancouver. They build trust with the youth and encourage them to access our programs where they can get something to eat, clothing, an outside referral or just a friendly conversation. Housing workers and Mental Health Clinicians are also available.

Crisis Program

Our 63-bed Crisis Program offers safe housing, food, clothing and counselling to young people aged 16-24 who are ready to make a change in their lives. We take care of their immediate needs first, which are usually medical attention, food and rest. We encourage youth to create their own plan for independence, and support them to achieve their goals and dreams.

Rights of Passage Program

This is a transitional living program for young people who need housing, structure and support as they strive toward independence. We teach basic life skills that many of us take for granted, such as budgeting, cooking, cleaning and goal-setting. We also provide emotional support and counselling. We are proud to report that 100% of youth in ROP transition off the street.

The Impact of our Programs



Sally

When Sally was 14, she was kidnapped and forced to do sex work. For two years, she was held with 12 other underage girls in a human trafficking ring. Sally was 16 when she finally escaped, finding her way

to Covenant House Toronto, where she was provided with the support she needed. Our colleagues in Toronto flew Sally back home to Vancouver, where she connected with our team.

She had a safe place to sleep in Vancouver, but our Outreach Team texted her weekly to check in and remind her that we were there to help if she needed anything at all. A few weeks later, Sally reached out—she needed a bed as the one she was sleeping on was falling apart. One of our

Housing Workers picked up a bed at WRAGS (Western Regional Advocacy Group Society), which provides clean mattresses to people in need, and delivered it to her.

Sally had minimal support from her family, so she was thrilled to hear about the ways that we could support her. Over time, we were able to build a trusting relationship with Sally and her boyfriend. Our Outreach Team was able to help get her on Income Assistance. Due to her past





trauma, Sally was able to qualify for Persons with Disabilities Assistance. We helped her move into her own place and made sure she had her basic needs met, including transportation to appointments.

When Sally was summoned to Toronto to testify in court against her human traffickers, our Outreach Team accompanied her. The staff here and in Toronto worked together to provide the 24-hour emotional, practical and mental support Sally needed to

get through this very stressful and traumatic time. Both Covenant House Vancouver and Toronto staff surrounded this young woman with unconditional love and absolute respect, and Sally was able to successfully speak out against her kidnappers and traffickers. What might have been one of the most traumatic experiences of her young life

What might have been
the most traumatic
experience of her life
was made into a situation

**where she felt powerful
in having her story
heard and affirmed.**

turned into an
empowering situation,
and we are proud of Sally
for her tremendous display
of courage and strength.



Relationship building is at the core of what we do at Covenant House Vancouver, but it is not always easy. The youth we work with have often lost trust with the adults in their lives, and rebuilding that sense of confidence in other people is an important step in their recovery. As with any relationship, sometimes there are bumps in the road. This story from Jerry, a long-time Youth Worker in our Rights of Passage program, illustrates the importance of consistently showing up for the youth we serve.



Jim

Jim came into the Rights of Passage program over two-and-a-half years ago. Intelligent and personable, he has a knack for leading roundtable discussions with his peers. From philosophy to metaphysics, health matters

to politics, Jim can talk about anything, and it's fascinating to listen to him.

In the early days, he and I developed a good rapport, and it was smooth sailing for the first few weeks. But we eventually had a disagreement which turned into a confrontation, and I watched that good rapport come crumbling down like a sand castle on the shores of a turbulent ocean.

I was bullheaded, and so was he. Neither of us were willing to compromise in the moment.

Unfortunately, the disagreement festered. Even though I made numerous attempts to repair the relationship, I had broken Jim's trust and he wasn't going to let me win it back easily. My attempts at reconnecting were brushed aside or met with sarcastic comments. The days turned into weeks, and then months, and the rift seemed to only deepen.

But one Sunday morning, Jim was quietly preparing his breakfast: a batch of garlic rice. The smell wafted into my office, and I called out to him that his cooking smelled delicious. As had become usual, he ignored me and didn't say a word. But when the rice was ready, Jim asked me if I wanted to try it. I was shocked, and said "yes" without hesitation.

He plated some for me, and we sat across from each other,

enjoying the delicious food. I complimented him on his cooking and he enthusiastically told me all about the ingredients, proportions, and how he manages to cook the garlic without burning it. This chat turned into a discussion about our families' cooking styles and our favourite dishes, and his methods as to not burn the garlic. We then proceeded to share who cooks what in the family and our favourite dishes.

As we shared that meal, I felt a heavy load lift from my shoulders. Any discord and bitterness that remained between us dissipated into thin air and was taken over by the sweet aroma of the garlic. The rice was delicious, but it was the gesture that spoke loudest to me—he invited to me to partake in food that he had carefully prepared, and I understood the significance of it. That day was a turning point in our relationship, and a very important learning experience for me.



Ryan

When Ryan arrived at our Crisis Program he struggled daily to cope with his overwhelming anxiety and constant suicidal thoughts. Diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, he had a hard time with social interactions and with regulating his emotions, and would become overwhelmed quite easily which would lead to behaviours like snapping a pencil in half, hitting his head on his locker or saying inappropriate things.

But Ryan had a lot of people in his corner, as the team of youth workers made it a priority to find a way to empower him. After months of hard work and continued relationship building, Ryan started Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) (a group therapy that helps participants regulate their emotions and manage stress). He grew his support network and started to create some strong relationships with some of his co-residents.



The friendships Ryan cultivated were so strong that the group came up with a name for themselves: “The Couch Committee.” Every day, they would all come in, sit as a group on the couches, and talk for hours. After a couple of months, Ryan was happy, smiling and laughing. He was extremely motivated, completing tasks left and right, and he was actively using his new coping skills and strategies.

Over the final four months of his stay, Ryan dealt with a lot of ups and some downs, but he became a stronger, more resilient and determined adult. Through DBT, Ryan was able to learn strategies to overcome his anxiety. His drive and work ethic were impressive, and he completed many goals in a short period of time including getting a full-time job.

After seven months with us, Ryan was ready to live

Ryan dealt with a lot of ups and some downs, but he became a stronger, more resilient and determined adult. Through DBT, Ryan was able to learn strategies to overcome his anxiety.



independently. He applied to live at Hollyburn Properties, which has a partnership with Covenant House to provide reduced cost and completely furnished rental apartments for our youth.

After his housing interview, he would come up to his youth

worker multiple times a day to ask the same questions: “Did I get it? How many other guys am I competing against? Do you know and you just can’t tell me? Can you tell me?” He was ready to take the next step in his life, and he could barely contain his excitement.



The day he got the good news that he was the one and only successful candidate for Hollyburn Housing, he walked into the Crisis Program with a smile so big he was almost laughing. Ryan worked incredibly hard to overcome his personal


challenges and we were all so proud of him. Before he moved out, he shared six words that encompass the reason that Covenant House exists: "You gave me my life back."

Highlights from the past year




We participated in the Pride Sunset Beach Festival to **Support LGBTQ2S+ Youth.**


25 - 40% of CHV's homeless youth identify as LGBTQ2S+ & family rejection is the leading cause of their homelessness.



LGBTQ2S+ Drop-In nights were held monthly to provide youth with companionship and activities to encourage creativity.



Long-time supporters Fusion Projects won the **Giving Hearts Award** for Outstanding Small Business.



4 Sleep Out events raised more than \$1,900,000! That includes the first-ever Entrepreneur Edition.



COVENANT HOUSE
Sleep Out
To Support Homeless Youth



We ensured our residents got plenty of opportunities for fun, some of which this year included a sushi-making workshop, snowshoeing and art workshops.

The Home Depot Canada Foundation supported us with their


Orange Door Project Campaigns

which raises money for youth experiencing homelessness.



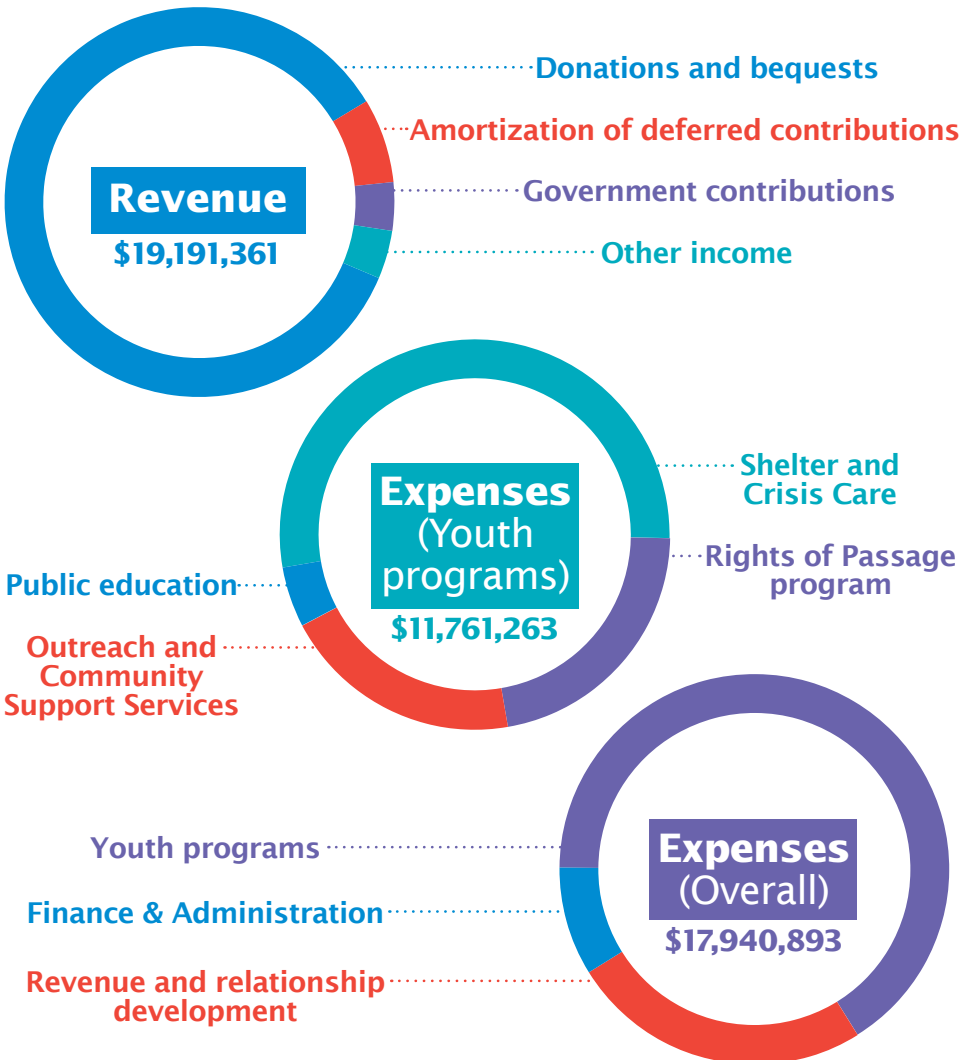
We welcomed youth into our new building at 1302 Seymour St.

11-year-old Olivia sewed adorable handmade creatures and donated 25% of her craft-sale earnings to Covenant House Vancouver. Her dad matched the donation, and **together they donated \$300** worth of gift cards.



Staff received trauma-informed practice training to help them understand how trauma changes the brain, and how it can affect behaviour and relationships.

The Impact of Your Generosity



Senior Staff

Krista Thompson
Chief Executive Officer

John Harvey
Chief Program Officer

Herb Eibensteiner
Chief Operating Officer

Tracy Brown
Director, Development

Brenda Kumar
Director, People & Culture

Andrew Poon
Director, Communications

The Reverend Mark Munn
Ombudsperson & Spiritual Care

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Chair
The Insurance Corporation of BC

Daryl Wiebe
Superintendent (retired)
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