

**PURPOSE SOCIETY TAKES OVER FORMER ARMY & NAVY STORE
TO CREATE CHRISTMAS HUB IN NEW WESTMINSTER
Christmas Hamper Program at core of initiative**

December 4, 2020 – New Westminster, BC – The Lower Mainland’s **Purpose Society for Youth and Families** has set up shop in the former Army & Navy store, 502 Columbia Street in New Westminster, converting it into a hub for its annual Christmas Hamper Program.

Purpose Society will receive donations to create Christmas hampers that will then be distributed to families’ in-need throughout the Lower Mainland on Friday, December 18th. All Covid safety directives are followed and there is plenty of room to social distance on the 20,000 square foot main floor that is accessed from Columbia Street.

From December 9th through 18th, Purpose Society will begin receiving donor contributions to the New Westminster location from 10 am – 2 pm. The entire staff of Purpose comes together to create what Lynda Fletcher-Gordon describes as “Santa’s workshop” and takes on whatever tasks need to be handled.

“This is such an important community initiative which allows us to bring a bit of holiday magic to children and families,” said Lynda Fletcher-Gordon, Co-Founder, Purpose.

Over the course of the year, Purpose Society staff in conjunction with community partners, identify families who would benefit from hampers. Donors of Purpose Society are then contacted and offered the opportunity to participate in an anonymous act-of-kindness, choosing to donate for a small or larger family. The donor is given generic family information that includes ages, sizes and even a ‘wish list’.

What began as a simple act of kindness when one hamper was left quietly on the porch of a single mother with four children over 20 years ago, has grown into an annual tradition that now provides hampers filled with food, clothing and presents for disadvantaged families.

The Christmas Hamper Program is in addition to the regular food distribution which has grown to serve 800 people per week during COVID. Purpose Society also operates a Health and Harm Reduction Van which will also uses extra holiday donations of cash, mitts, toques, scarves and other items for people who may be homeless or marginally housed and in need of support.

###