



# The Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth & Families Annual Report 2023-2024

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## Message from the Board President 2023-2024

Since becoming President of the Board of Directors for the Lower mainland Purpose Society, I have always looked forward to the opportunity to write a message for our annual report. This message allows me the opportunity, on behalf of the Board, to complete several objects.

A primary duty of the Board is to monitor how closely the organization is adhering to its stated mission. Board members read and accept reports from each department on a regular basis.

When we do so we can easily draw the line between what our organization's purpose is and how we are progressing towards the fulfillment of our mission.

Writing this message also allows me to express the Board's gratitude for the dedication, professionalism and commitment of the staff and administration of LMPS. We are nothing without the people who have their boots on the ground dealing with the day-to-day reasons we exist. LMPS people are extraordinary individuals who understand that being part of a community means service to others.

Testimony to the work being done is the recognition LMPS has received from people outside of our organization. LMPS, this past year has received recognition from the New Westminster Chamber of Commerce, as well as a congratulatory message from our MLA, the Honourable Member, Ms. Whiteside, in the provincial legislature.

It is important that this message not only focuses on the last year, but also looks to the continued challenges before us. The complex and pervasive issue of addiction remains before us. To highlight this, I share recent stats as reported by Michelle Gamage last January:

- 2511 deaths from toxic overdoses in BC in 2023.
- 77% of those deaths were male (non-binary and gender diverse people not recorded).
- 70% were between the ages of 30 and 59.
- 65% were from smoking drugs.
- 47% of the deaths occurred in their private residence. 33% were indoors at a hotel, or temporary residence. All others (19%) included inside a car, on the street or in a park.

Another objective is to provide appropriate housing for people experiencing homelessness. LMPS is working with local and provincial authorities to implement creative ways to address this much needed and important issue in the lives of so many.

Finally, food security for so many of our community members remains an essential focus of our work. When I highlight these three areas of focus, I am not forgetting the many other ways LMPS will continue to support our community. Counselling and medical support to families, children, students, and individuals regardless of identity is a day-to-day activity that will continue to be an essential focus of LMPS.

Rick Fabbro,

President, Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families, 2023-2024

# Childcare Programs Annual Report

## April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

### OVERVIEW

The Lower Mainland Purpose Society for Youth and Families (Purpose Society) provides quality Child Care Programs to children from birth to 12 years since 1994, in a variety of settings that meet family and community needs. The Society has nine centers providing 11 programs to the communities of Burnaby and New Westminster:

#### Burnaby

- Cameron Children's Centre
- Capitol Hill Children's Centre – at Capitol Hill Elementary
- Kitchener School Age Care – at Kitchener Elementary
- Madison Children's Centre
- Rosser Children's Centre (Preschool and School Age Programs) – at Rosser Elementary
- Yukon Crescent Children's Centre and Yukon School Age Program

#### New Westminster

- Ready Set Grow Children's Centre – at Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary School
- Qayqayt Children's Centre – at F.W. Howay Elementary School
- Skwo:wech Children's Centre – at Skwo:wech Elementary School

It is our vision that all daycare centres operated by the Purpose Society strive to provide quality child care services that reflect the importance of positive early childhood experiences in determining healthy outcomes in all areas of children's development. This is achieved through following to our childcare philosophy, the provision of professionally trained and certified staff, and offering enhanced child care programming in a developmentally appropriate and inviting environment.

It is the policy of the Society that no family will be discriminated against on the basis of race, language, socio-economic status, gender or sexual orientation.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Skwo:wech Children's Centre

Skwo:wech Children's Centre opened its doors on July 3, 2023. The Centre is located at the Skwo:wech Elementary School. It is operated by the Purpose Society in partnership with the New Westminster School District and has a capacity of 37 spaces: 12 for children under 30 months and 25 for children 30 months to school age.

The enrollment was modest for the first half a year of operation (25% over six months). On March 1, 2024, the Centre opened the Toddler program with four children and the number of children in the 3 – 5 Program increased to 16. Our forecasts indicate that the Centre will reach full enrollment in July 2024, by its first anniversary. In the past, it will take 3 – 4 years for a new centre to operate at full capacity.

### Relocation of Qayqayt and Ready Set Grow

Qayqayt Children's Centre relocated to a new portable, on the grounds of F.W. Howay Elementary School in February 2024. Ready Set Grow Children's Centre moved to Lord Tweedsmuir Elementary in March 2024.

Workers from the School District helped with the relocation, including moving furniture and equipment. We would like to thank the New Westminster School District for their support during the relocation of the two centres.

The Society and the School District carefully planned the relocations and the last loads of equipment and furniture were moved over the weekends. With enhanced support, both centres were able to provide uninterrupted services to the families.

Most of the families kept their children enrolled in the two centres upon relocation; however, those living in the downtown core not possessing a car, withdrew their children.

### Rowan Ave Daycare IPD Project

Purpose Society learned in the summer of 2022 that the City of Burnaby selected the Society as the successful proponent that will serve as the operator of the new child care centre to be built at Burnaby Lake, on Rowan Avenue. The Centre will be the fourth one operated by the Society in partnership with the City. The Centre will give priority to children of City of Burnaby and Burnaby RCMP employees. The second priority is to the residents of Burnaby.

During the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year, Purpose Society worked along the IDP Project team and provided input on the design of the Centre’s indoor and outdoor space, as well as on the furniture and equipment necessary.

### **Rosser School Age Program**

Opened in September 2020, the School Age program at Rosser Children’s Centre continued to grow the number of children attending. The program continued to provide care to children enrolled at Rosser Elementary and Gilmore Elementary. On the fourth year of operation, the enrollment in the program increased to 98%.

### **Yukon School Age Program**

All new children enrolled in the program in September 2023 are siblings of children attending the program graduating from the Centre’s 3 – 5 Program. No children from the waitlist got a place in the program.

### **Summer Program**

Yukon Crescent Children’s Centre offered a summer program in July and August of 2023. The first priority was given to all children in need of extra support attending any of the Society’s three school age programs. Second priority was given to children attending the centre hosting the program – Yukon Crescent. Any remaining spots were given to children enrolled at Rosser or Kitchener School Age Program.

### **Canada Summer Job Program (CSJ) – July and August 2023**

Yukon Crescent School Age program was successful in securing funding to hire two students that worked in the centre for eight weeks, for the entire duration of the summer program.

The Canada Summer Job Program contributed to creating mutually beneficial experiences for students and the program participants. The centre will participate in the 2024 CSJ Program.

### **Professional Development/Training**

As part of our commitment to encourage and support staff with their professional development, educators were able to access financial support provided by the Society to attend training sessions, on topics of their choice, related to the ECE field, organized outside the agency.

On December 22, 2023, the educators participated in a full day Professional Day, facilitated by Mary Kim, pedagogist with the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network (ECPN). During the current fiscal year, educators from all centres participating in the ECPN program had access to

numerous professional training sessions facilitated by the pedagogist in each centre, or in learning circles organized for all educators. Permanent educators collected 15 - 20 hours of professional development hours during the course of the fiscal year, to be used towards renewing their ECE License. Casual educators were encouraged to attend these sessions.

The educators working in all centres located in Burnaby continued to receive support from BC Centre for Ability consultants especially on creating supportive strategies to help children with special needs. Kinsight and Spirit of the Children consultants worked on a similar capacity to support the three centres located in New Westminster.

## **Expanding Partnerships**

### **Working with a Pedagogist (ECPN)**

Started in late spring 2020, the collaboration with the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network (ECPN) continued.

“The Early Childhood Pedagogist Program – funded by the BC Ministry of Education and Child Care and hosted by ECPN – supports early childhood educators in British Columbia. Pedagogists transform early childhood centres by working alongside educators and children in curricular projects that engage with the B.C. Early Learning Framework’s vision.” (ECPN website).

The pedagogists continued to meet with staff of each program within a centre on a biweekly basis, to discuss the activities organized for children, and their observations and discoveries during these activities. The pedagogists helped educators to further enhance children’s learning experiences to ensure that the learning is holistic.

The pedagogist organized learning circles with the centres. Centres were grouped geographically to ensure the educators have easy access to the location and cut travel time.

This partnership between Purpose Society and ECPN will be extended in the near future to incorporate Skwo:wech Children’s for children and their families to experience its benefits.

### **Servicing Children with Special Needs**

All centres operating under the Purpose Society umbrella promote inclusion and children with special needs are welcome in all of the Society’s programs. Staff is equipped with the knowledge and skills to effectively work with the children requiring extra support.

During the past year, our centres continued to provide care for children in need for individual

support. Seven diagnosed special needs children (ranging from those on the autism spectrum to those with developmental delay, including non-verbal, ADHD, selective mutism etc.) and their families found a supportive and inclusive environment in our centres. The centres hired one-on-one support for each child receiving funding.

It has been observed that post COVID, the number of children displaying challenging behavior and in need additional support is more than double in some centres.

## **Province of British Columbia Child Care Initiatives and Support**

### **Child Care Fee Reduction Program (CCFR)**

The Society submitted an application and all centres were approved for the Child Care Fee Reduction Program, enabling parents to pay reduced child care fees for the current fiscal year.

### **ECE Wage Enhancement**

The Society applied and was approved for the ECE Wage Enhancement Program for the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year. All educators and supported child development workers possessing a valid ECE License to practice received a \$4.00/hour for all the hours they are providing direct service to children. The amount increased to \$6.00/hour effective December 1, 2023. In addition, educators holding post-basic credential qualify for additional funding; however, to receive it, they need to apply individually.

### **Affordable Child Care Benefit**

All of our centres have in attendance children whose families are eligible and are recipients of the Affordable Child Care Benefit (ACCB). The benefit is paid directly to the centre in which the qualifying family has their child(ren) enrolled.

## **CHALLENGES**

An increased number of children spend between 10 and 11 hours in the centres on a daily basis. As a result, additional staff needed to be hired in order to maintain the staff to children ratio required by Licensing Regulations. Also, undiagnosed children required additional support, which was supplemented in the form of additional staff in the program(s). A number of educators on a floating ECE or ECE Assistant position were hired to accommodate the needs of

each individual centre.

Our centres continue to experience a shortage of experienced childcare educators in both Burnaby and New Westminster centres. It is particularly difficult to attract and retain staff holding a valid ECE License or post basic credentials. The province wide labour shortage of quality educators continues to be deep. The experienced educators are providing constant mentoring to those less experienced and the new hires.

During the 2023 - 2024 fiscal year, the average enrollment in each centre was as follows:

- Cameron Children's Centre – 100%
- Capitol Hill Children's Centre -100%
- Madison Children's Centre – 100%
- Yukon Crescent Children's Centre – 100%
- Ready Set Grow Children's Centre – 99.6%
- Rosser Preschool - 87%
- Rosser School Age Program - 98%
- Kitchener School Age Program – 99.5%
- Yukon Crescent School Age Program – 100%
- Qayqayt Children's Centre – 99%
- Yukon Summer Program - 93%

## Staffing

Eight ECE Assistants enrolled into an ECE program and four ECE enrolled into post basis training to upgrade their skills. After graduation, they will be able to fill vacant positions in our centres, positions requiring an ECE license to practice. Numerous casual employees were hired on a permanent full-time basis to fill vacant ECE or ECE Assistants positions, as well as new Supported Child Development Workers.

Most of the permanent vacancies were filled by internal candidates that were working in a casual capacity. The number of vacancies exceeded the number of interested internal candidates; therefore, the positions were advertised on various venues. A record number of applicants responded to the postings; however most of them did not meet the qualifications required for the positions and many of them required support in applying for a Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) or Provincial Nomination Program (PNP). They have very limited or

no Canadian work experience. We had some success in hiring quality candidates for a limited number of positions.

Below is a breakdown of the number of staff working during the fiscal year in each position classification, in each centre:

Centre / Position	Site Manager	Program Supervisor	ECE	ECE Assistant	Child Development Support Workers	Activity Worker	Casual Employee
Cameron	1	2	6	2	-	-	3
Capitol Hill	1	-	3	-	1	1	3
Madison	1	2	5	3	-	-	3
Kitchener	1	-	-	1	1	-	1
Qayqayt	1	1	6	1	-	-	2
Ready Set Grow	1	2	4	3	-	-	1
Rosser	1	-	1	1	1	1	1
Yukon	1	3	8	2	1	1	5
Skwo:wech	1	1					
Any Centre/ Floating	1						

## OUTPUTS

### **Families Served**

The nine child care centres operated by Purpose Society offer child care services in 338 licensed spaces. During this fiscal year, the centres provided child care to a total of 370 families and 416 children (425 last fiscal) living in Burnaby, New Westminister, Tri Cities, Surrey and Vancouver. Although the number of spaces increased in the last fiscal year with the opening of a new centre, the number of children enrolled was lower. The decrease in the number of children is due to part time children taking full time spaces. Particularly, preschoolers attending a part time and/or a two-hour program signed up for the four-hour, full time program.

The childcare centres offer full-time and part-time services based on family needs and space availability in each centre. Fifty-four (54) families had two or more children enrolled in our centres. Ready Set Grow Children’s Centre provided child care services and support to 15 young parents (14 last fiscal).

Eighty-eight percent (88%) of the families served by our Burnaby centres reside in Burnaby, 1% in New Westminister, 7.3% in Coquitlam and the remaining 3.7% residing in the surrounding cities. The breakdown of Burnaby residents by City of Burnaby owned centres is as follows: Cameron – 61% (32% in the neighboring Coquitlam), Madison – 90% and Yukon – 92.5%).

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of the families served by our New Westminister centre reside in New Westminister, 12% reside in Burnaby, 3% in Surrey, 2.5% in Coquitlam, 1.5% in Vancouver, 1% in Langley and 1% reside in Delta. These families do not reside, but work in New Westminister.

The families serviced work full time, part time, from home or attend school. Incomes range from requiring full Affordable Child Care Benefit to no benefit at all.

# OUTCOME MEASUREMENTS

## Parent Survey Overview

The annual parent survey was conducted in March 2024. A questionnaire was distributed to parents at all centres. Parents had the opportunity to provide feedback on seven main areas: programming, staff, interaction and communication with staff, centre’s physical environment, outdoor play area, food, and Society’s policies.

The survey provides staff and management with formal feedback in addition to the regular feedback or suggestions that parents are able to provide on a regular basis.

Once again, most of the parents provided a variety of positive comments regarding the educators employed by the centres: caring and friendly with children and families, they are professional, approachable and ready to answer their questions. Many parents indicated that it is easy to communicate with the educators (although some language barriers have been noted). The educators build positive relationships with families; they are flexible and follow children’s lead (even more since the collaboration with the ECPN).

These are some comments made by families:

*“The staff are very friendly and my daughter has a close bond with them. They are caring and professional. My daughter is always welcomed warmly when she gets to the center in the morning and is always acknowledged. I can see that she feels loved and is very happy. The program is also well suited and my daughter loves and enjoy attending the centre so much.”*

*“I'm grateful not just for having childcare but for my daughter to have an extended community around her of caring and knowledgeable staff outside of the family unit and regular school. This means that she has more people she can learn from and trust to support her well-being and development in all areas.”*

*“Just thank all staff for taking care of my 2 boys. It’s been 6 years to date. E misses the centre and teacher's kindness and support. He doesn't have the same in school at least not for now. Thank you for your love support and kindness.”*

*“Wonderful teachers and curriculum. R has learned so much attending this centre. We are grateful for everything the teachers do to make it a fun, safe and comfortable environment for the kids. R has come a long way since starting [the centre] and we will miss it very much when he starts Kindergarten this year. Thank you for the wonderful and positive experience.”*

*“We are so grateful to the centre. Our kids are happy, healthy and well loved there. We appreciate the extra things our kids learn and experience like Kimchi (a new fav) and lunar New Year. Over all we give you the teachers an enthusiastic 10/10 score.”*

*“Teachers genuinely enjoy interaction with children and have lots of patience.”*

*“What I appreciate most is the professional staff and principal [site manager] they are wonderful at their job and make every child*

Some parents indicated that would like to receive more information about their children’s day at the pick-up time. Most parents appreciate the effort made by educators in all centres to keep them informed of their children’s daily experience in the centre. Communication via email continued to be the main venue.

The families are very happy receiving the “Goodbye Book” when their children transition into the next program or when they leave/graduate from the centre). They also like the occasional photographs they receive of their children taken during daily activities. They would like to receive more of them, including videos of their children engaged in various activities. They also understand this can be time consuming for educators.

The children requiring extra support are helped on a constant basis and parents can see the progress in various areas including positive changes in children’s behaviour, as well as an overall improvement in their social and emotional skills. Some children are still waiting for a diagnosis or funding for a one-on-one support.

An increased number of families would like to see their children having shorter naps or to not having a nap because it is hard for their children to fall asleep at night.

Parents of children attending the school age programs made, in general, positive comments regarding the quality of activities organized by staff, for their children. One parent stated “How fun & upbeat it is which is really down to site manager's wonderful personality and leadership!” Some parents would like to see a better variety of activities for older children. Most of them are very happy with the program.

Some parents continue to speak about the need to have more stable staff in each program, but they understand the childcare sector is still in need for more educators. Other parents feel that the language barriers of some educators influence the quality of communication.

Some parents from Ready Set Grow and Qayqayt indicated that the new locations are too far from where they live and the commute is difficult (especially for families without a vehicle or taking public transportation). Some parents stated that the Ready Set Grow's playground at the current location is “smaller and less attractive”. On the contrast, many Qayqayt families like their centre's new playground because it is more appealing and located next to a sports field.

Some survey responders indicated they like that children stay active during their time in the centre. One parent says *“I like that kids are going for neighborhood walks, to the park and explore outside (field trip).”* Another stated *“My child enjoys his time so much he asks us to pick him up later. He also has better sleep habits and listens more.”* *“Daily routine is structured and includes lots of outside play”* said another. A few parents like the planters with vegetables that children and educators tend.

Some parents would like to see more flexibility for dropping time, so children could sleep more in the morning (past 9:30am). Others would like educators to spend more time at the pick time to get more updates on their children's day in the centre.

Other families would like children to have a hot lunch more often. Others are asking for a permanent hot lunch program in the centre.

Some parents appreciate the length of centres' business hours. One parent stated *“Daycare hours start at 7am which is very helpful for people who need to start work earlier.”*

As they are happy with the care provided by the centre, some parents offer their help in the future. One parent said *“Thank you for operating this great child care centre. Let us know if we can help in any regard.”*

OUTCOMES	% OF PARENTS WHO AGREED
<b>Program is well planned and suitable to all ages</b>	100% Cameron 100% Capitol Hill 92% Kitchener 100% Madison 100% Qayqayt 100% Ready Set Grow 92% Rosser 100% Skwo:wech 100% Yukon
<b>Staff members are professional, approachable and provide good care</b>	99% Cameron 96% Capitol Hill 98% Kitchener 98% Madison 99% Ready Set Grow 99% Qayqayt 92% Rosser 98% Skwo:wech 100% Yukon
<b>Staff have regular, informal discussions with parents</b>	92% Cameron 95% Capitol Hill 94% Kitchener 98% Madison 95% Ready Set Grow 99% Qayqayt 93% Rosser 100% Skwo:wech 100% Yukon
<b>The inside environment is safe, clean and attractive to children</b>	100% Cameron 100% Capitol Hill 98% Kitchener 100% Madison 95% Ready Set Grow 100% Qayqayt 95% Rosser

	100% Skwo:wech 100% Yukon
<b>Food provided is balanced and appealing</b>	100% Cameron 91% Capitol Hill 98% Kitchener 98% Madison 97% Ready Set Grow 92% Qayqayt 94% Rosser 91% Skwo:wech 95% Yukon
<b>Outdoor play area is clean, safe and well equipped</b>	98% Cameron 93% Capitol Hill 94% Kitchener 96% Madison 94% Ready Set Grow 100% Qayqayt 98% Rosser 89% Skwo:wech 98% Yukon
<b>Parents are satisfied with the health and safety policies and practices of the centre</b>	97% Cameron 93% Capitol Hill 99% Kitchener 91% Madison 95% Ready Set Grow 98% Qayqayt 92% Rosser 100% Skwo:wech 95% Yukon

## MOVING FORWARD

The Society will continue to actively participate in meetings organized with the project team to provide input into creating a quality child care centre offering 74 child care spaces at Rowan Ave Centre in Burnaby, aimed to open in the spring of 2025. Our Purpose team will prepare and submit all documentation to obtain a Fraser Health Licence and a Business Licence to operate Rowan Children’s Centre.

A list of interested families is already open and families started placing their name on the list.

Purpose Society will be continuing the partnership with the Early Childhood Pedagogy Network (ECPN) to organize more training activities, including learning circles for all educators working in the centres. Skwo:wech Children's Centre will start working with a pedagogist in the winter of 2025 after all new children and educators are settled.

Our team will start the process of obtaining a new license at Kitchener. The Burnaby School District has announced that Kitchener Elementary School needs our program space to accommodate the increased number of children attending the school. During the 2024 – 2025 school year, the school age program will move to a new portable built on school premises.

Once the school age program moves into the new building, a preschool program will be added to operate on school instructional days.

Attracting and retaining staff will continue to be a major priority in the new fiscal year. Staff will continue to be provided with opportunities for professional development and support when moving into a different position within the centre or within the agency (moving to another centre).

We will continue to maintain a pool of casual employees and permanent floaters (ECE or ECE Assistants) that will cover sick, vacation time or temporary vacancies in all centres. We will continue to maintain all current partnerships with major ECE colleges and closely work with the Practicum Coordinators to accommodate practicum students' in our centres.

The centres will continue to ensure quality child care services is provided to all children enrolled in the centres. We are continuously looking into embracing new concepts or initiatives that, in our professional opinion, will enhance children's healthy development that will assist them with a successful transition into the school environment.

We will continue to implement new programs that in our professional view, contribute to enhancing children's development and learning.

# Family Programs Annual Report

April 2023-March 2024

## OVERVIEW

The Lower Mainland Purpose Society provides a variety of family programs to the residents of New Westminster, Burnaby, and Tri-Cities. These programs include support in areas of parenting skills, interventions, techniques, education, information and access to community services and resources, and family and individual counselling. These services are voluntary and are provided in a variety of settings including on-site, client homes, and community settings to address the diverse needs of the families. The program employs a strength-based client-centered approach. The objective of the program is to increase coping skills through increased knowledge and the ability to use acceptable parenting skills. The program offers individual sessions with the family and also offers goal-specific groups and parenting groups throughout the year. Program staff work collaboratively with the Ministry of Children and Family Development, Child and Youth Mental Health, and other service providers in the community.

### Family Programs include:

- a. **Family Development Work:** This is an outreach service that provides parenting education and teaches parenting skills to families. This service focuses on a range of issues including child development, roles and responsibilities, behavior strategies, appropriate discipline, parental coping, and other effective parenting skills. Referrals are accepted through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) as well as Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) for residents of New Westminster and Burnaby. The Ministry of Children and Family Development funds this service.
- b. **Outreach Therapy, Short Term Family Therapy, and Links Tri-Cities – Family Therapy:** The Purpose Society provides brief, professional therapy to assist families in identifying critical issues that may interfere with their ability to make creative and effective choices. Presenting issues may include parental coping, relationship concerns, family integration, anger management, family dynamics, or historical abuse affecting parenting. Referrals for the first two therapy services are accepted through the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) as well as Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) for residents of New Westminster and Burnaby. Referrals for Links Family Therapy are accepted through Child and Youth Mental Health (CYMH) for residents of the Tri-Cities area. The Ministry of Children and Family Development funds these services.

- c. **Young Parent Support:** Juggling school, parenthood, home, and personal life is an ongoing challenge for all parents. The Young Parent Support Worker helps pregnant and parenting young people (25 years of age and under) to build supportive relationships while facilitating growth, respecting diversity, and furthering healthy parent-child development. The Young Parent Support Worker provides one-to-one support in parenting issues, exploring educational opportunities, and setting and achieving personal, academic, and career goals. The Young Parent Support Worker is also available to assist in building life skills, budgeting, nutrition, connecting to community services and resources, and more. This service is open to Ministry referrals, community-based referrals, and self-referrals.
- d. **Supervised Access Visitation** – New Westminster & Burnaby
- e. **Psycho-educational groups** – Overcoming Anger, Parental Support, and much more.

## ITEM 1

### Program Highlights

Despite multiple staffing changes throughout the year, the Family Futures program continued to deliver in-person services to best meet the needs of clients. The team provided high-quality service to children, youth and their families across the Lower Mainland area. The Family Programs team continued to work collaboratively with MCFD social workers, Child and Youth Mental Health Clinicians, and other community partners, making intentional efforts to increase connection and improve these relationships.

Multiple psycho-educational groups were offered during the program year, with plans made to bring back previously offered groups as well implement new opportunities. The popular Overcoming Anger group was delivered during the winter months, with sessions split in half around the Christmas holiday season. Clients were able to first learn about anger and strategies for managing strong emotions, then pause from sessions with the opportunity to practice what they had learned over the holidays, and then return to reflect on their experiences. To address common themes arising with clients, staff coordinated a Financial Literacy workshop to start the new annual year. For this four session series, open to the community, staff partnered with Chartered Professional Accountants of BC to offer workshops on topics such as Managing your Money, and Effective Tax Strategies. Planning ahead for the next program year, the family team will offer both of these groups again, and additionally will bring back the Parenting Children with Challenging Behaviours workshop, and implement the Connect Attachment Program parenting workshop.

Staff members have continued to further develop their professional skills to stay on the leading edge of practice information and provide current, strength-based interventions and programs to children and their families. The Family programs team participated in various professional development opportunities throughout the year on topics including: Grief and Loss, Early Psychosis Intervention, Naloxone Training, File Management, Human Trafficking and Exploitation, and Drugs and their Effects (Harm Reduction). Select members of the team had opportunities to participate in additional professional development such as Indigenous Cultural Safety – Mental Health, Mental Health First Aid, and Connect Attachment Program Facilitator Training. All team members additionally had access to the Homeless Services Association British Columbia (HSABC) training calendar, which offered a variety of relevant topics to enhance professional knowledge.

## Staffing

Throughout this fiscal year, the Family Programs faced staffing challenges across multiple positions. The previous Program Director (Michelle Saldeba) left the agency in June 2023 and Hillary Gallinger (Family Therapist) again stepped into the position on an ‘interim’ basis, although only working two days per week. In August 2023, Melissa Bailey was hired to fill the Program Director position.

Vacancies left by Family Development/ Supervised Access Workers Maria Terante (April 2023) and Amrita Kaur (May 2023) were filled in May 2023 by Attila Csupity and Jaspreet Sidhu. After Attila Csupity resigned in September 2023, his vacancy was briefly filled by Barry O’Herlihy (November 2023 to February 2024). This vacancy had not yet been filled when the 23/24 fiscal year ended though hiring efforts continued.

The Young Parent Support worker vacancy that carried over from the previous program year was briefly filled by Chimebere Onu (June 2023 to August 2023). The current worker, Natija Michelle, was hired as the new Young Parent Support worker in August 2023.

Priyanka Sethi resigned from her Family Therapist position in October 2023 and her position was filled by Sahar Tamadoni in November 2023. Hillary Gallinger resigned from her part-time Family Therapist position in January 2024.

*The Family Programs Staff Team are skilled and dedicated employees that strive to provide the best possible care to the community.*

Staffing at the end of March 2024 included:

**Program Director:** Melissa Bailey

**Links Tri-Cities/Outreach Therapy:** Tacky Chan

**Short-Term Family Therapy:** Alana Guidry, Sahar Tamadoni

**Family Development/Supervised Access:** Jordan McEvoy, Jaspreet Sidhu

**Young Parent Support:** Natija Michelle

### **Program Outputs**

The following table shows the number of service units and the number of families served by each program. A Service Unit is defined as “an hour of service provision to an identified client, or group of clients, and includes such activities as face-to-face contact, client-specific report writing, client-specific telephone calls, case management meetings, case consultation, and case supervision, training pre-approved by the MCFD, and community meetings and travel directly related to contracted services”.

<u>Outputs</u>	<u>Family Development Work</u>	<u>Supervised Access</u>	<u>STT</u>	<u>Outreach Therapy</u>	<u>Links- TriCities</u>	<u>Young Parent Support</u>
<b>Service Units - Actual</b>	1158.75	1401.25	2672	303.5	933.75	467
<b>Service Units – Target</b>	1839	2300	1094	564	690	1031
<b># of Families Served</b>	35	10	62	5	16	15

## Family Futures

We continued to feel some potential ongoing effects of COVID during this program year, including a decrease in referral numbers for multiple programs as well as inconsistency in engagement.

In particular, Family Development Work and Supervised Access were significantly affected by a decrease in referrals, resulting in much fewer families served this year: 35 vs 69 for Family Development and 10 vs 32 for Supervised Access. Fewer families resulted in fewer service units as well, and although service units fell below the target numbers, the ratio of service units to the number of families actually increased from the previous year, meaning the families that were participating were likely receiving higher levels of support. The occurrence of MCFD referral table meetings became more consistent during the second half of the year, resulting in more frequent referrals.

Despite the challenges faced by some individual programs, others such as Short Term Therapy (STT) continued to significantly exceed target service units, more than doubling the target during this program year. This program received the most referrals and served the highest number of families.

Similar to the previous year, some individual targets were not met but others were significantly exceeded, resulting in the combined total service units exceeding the target—service units provided from April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024 totaled 6936.25, well over the annual target of 5797.

## Links Tri-Cities and Young Parent Support

Tri-Cities Links again exceeded the annual target service units, even increasing slightly from the previous year. CYMH maintains a waitlist for this program and referrals are made consistently as space becomes available.

The Young Parent Support Program again fell below the target for service units, though the number of families served remained consistent with the previous year. Staffing presented a big challenge throughout the first half of the program year, negatively impacting service, but service steadily increased month by month once the current support worker was hired in August. By the end of March 2024, the Young Parent Program had 11 clients enrolled, the highest of the entire program year, and was seeing much more consistent engagement in the service.

## Outcomes Measurement and Client Satisfaction

Efforts were made throughout the program year to ensure clear guidance and expectations around collecting outcomes measures and client satisfaction from clients. These efforts paid off, resulted in an increase in participation. This year 18 families completed outcome measures and 10 completed client satisfaction surveys.

At the mid-point of service, 44% of responding families reported seeing improvement from the start of service, while 44% reported that their goals had been met. At the end of service, 94% of the families completing the outcome measurement reported that their original problem had improved, and their counsellor/FDW had provided them with the type of service they desired. 89% reported that they were using the skills learned during their sessions. At the time of referral, 63% of clients rated their parenting or coping skill between 1 and 4, labeled as “overwhelmed” or “unable to cope” versus 12% reporting this rating at the end of service. Participants rating these skills between 7 and 10 improved from 20% at time of referral to 79% at end of service.

Client satisfaction evaluations showed overall positive results. 100% of families reported that the service they received makes a difference in their day to day life, and 100% reported that the service met the needs they had at the beginning of service. On the 1-10 scale, 86% of participants gave a rating of 10 on all satisfaction survey questions. Suggested areas for change or improvement included increased length of service, change of environment due to noise and lack of ventilation, and opportunity to explore other approaches. Many comments praised individual providers, shared appreciation for the service, and mentioned improvement or newly learned skills.

## VISION

In the upcoming 2024-2025 fiscal year, the primary goal is to continue increasing service units by providing a variety of quality services to meet the needs of children, youth, and families and work to continue increasing engagement in services. Family Programs will create an annual schedule of psycho-educational and parenting groups that includes consistent offerings of established groups as well as a few new opportunities.

We will continue to connect and increase collaboration with community partners, and look for funding opportunities to expand the existing programs or add more programs to fill any gaps in services. The program intends to continue exploring fee-for-service options, which would allow

the program to accept additional referrals directly from the community and provide an additional funding source.

We will continue to prioritize professional development for staff members, surveying staff about the issues and themes they are seeing with families, as well as topics of interest. We will develop annual training plans to meet the needs of all team members. In addition to training offered in-house, staff members will be encouraged to continue pursuing relevant external professional development opportunities to support their work.

# ECD Family Programs Annual Report

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

## ITEM 2

### Overview

The Lower Mainland Purpose Society provides a variety of Early Childhood Development Family Programs to the residents of New Westminster, Burnaby, and neighbouring communities. These programs include parenting support, education, information and access to community services and referrals to family counselling. The objectives of the various programs are similar; however, do vary as required by each funder. Objectives include strengthened parenting confidence and ability, increased community awareness and resources, decreased isolation, increased inclusivity between families and increased children's involvement in programming.

This year seven programs were offered:

1. Pitter Patter
2. Family Circle
3. PLANS (Physical Literacy Arts Nature & Science)
4. EME (English Made Easy)
5. Building Community and Connections
6. Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program
7. Parent-Child Mother Goose

### Staffing Overview

ECD Family Programs had a stable team of facilitators, which resulted in building strong, caring relationships amongst colleagues and participants attending programming. The team also collaborated with Tri-Cities & Burnaby/New Westminster YMCA CCRR for two Infant-Child Mother Goose programs and the Summer Park Program. This partnership was very successful and we look forward to partnering again next year.

During the year, staff attended numerous professional development opportunities. Some of these trainings included:

- Tri-Cities & Burnaby/New Westminster YMCA CCRR Conference,

- CAPC Fraser Valley and Okanagan Regional Training,
- Parent-Child Mother Goose Teacher Training Program, YMCA BC – Kamloops Region,
- Nobody’s Perfect Facilitator Course, BC Council for Families.

Elizabeth, ECD Team Leader, continues to be active with the Literacy New West committee, Kids New West Community Table and NW Royal City Rotary.

Staff also represented Purpose and attended several community events:

- NW Royal City Rotary Spring Fling,
- 53rd Hyack International Parade,
- New to New West 2023 Festival,
- Queensborough Children's Festival,
- NW Community Bike Day.

## Program Highlights/Outputs

**‘PITTER PATER & FAMILY CIRCLE’** both fall under the Federal Government’s Public Health Agency of Canada’s CAPC, or Community Action Plan for Children initiative. Service delivery was in-person at local parks or indoors at Purpose. We still had a few families who were not comfortable attending indoor programming and would meet exclusively at the park. Staff were diligent following up with families and wellness checks as isolation and loneliness were still proving challenging for several families.

The summer park program, which used to be a combined group for PP and FC separated into two groups during the pandemic and continues in this delivery style. Attendance and community engagement was strong for the month of July.

In the fall, we decided to offer PP on Tuesdays and the change was well received, as families found it easier to get to group after the busyness of a weekend with young babies/toddlers.

**‘PLANS’** was financially supported by the New Westminster Royal City Rotary and with the City of NW, city services (picnic shelter space). PLANS is an outdoor program and families were excited to ‘get outdoors and get active!’ There were two series offered in the spring and fall at Queen’s Park and Ryall Park, Queensborough. Families continue to express their thanks to have service offered in Queensborough.

**'EME'**, was an opportunity for families to come together to learn and practice English, The facilitators led a strong program with topical, engaging conversations. We also opened attendance up to caregivers whose children attend primary school, as these parents often feel isolated and anxious with the transition year to Kindergarten.

**'Building Community and Connections'** was a six-week program for participants to learn about their neighbour's stories and hear guest speakers from the New Westminster Welcome Centre, Qayqayt First Nation Indigenous Community Development Administrator and Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers. In addition, a weekly art or craft was introduced to bring awareness to the connection between culture and craft. Arts and crafts included Indigenous beading, origami and age appropriate crafts for the children attending with their parents/caregivers.

**'Nobody's Perfect Parenting Program'** focused on learning about child development, safety, health, children's behaviour and positive parenting. It was a small but resolute, committed group of families that attended. Upon canvassing the families as to how they would prefer program delivery, the consensus was a virtual class, however for the last session we meet in-person, and participants shared that they wished the entire program had been delivered this way. This is good to note for future NPP programs. Kelli and Fran completed their NPP facilitator training and look forward to offering sessions next year.

**'Parent-Child Mother Goose Program'** was offered for the first time at Purpose. Kelli and Elizabeth completed their Mother Goose training and were able to facilitate two programs in collaboration with the Tri-Cities & Burnaby/New Westminster YMCA CCRR. This program is for parents and their babies or toddlers focusing on the pleasure of nurturing through rhymes, songs and stories. There was a great deal of interest from the community and we had strong attendance. Programming was offered at the New Westminster Public Library's auditorium, which accommodated the families nicely.

## **Group Outputs:**

The table reflects the number of visits, hours, families and individuals served during programs for the 2023- 2024 year. \*Please note: Family Circle and Pitter Patter outputs are consolidated.

<b>Group Outputs</b>	<b>CAPC: Pitter Patter &amp; Family Circle</b>	<b>PLANS</b>	<b>EME</b>	<b>Building Community &amp; Connections</b>	<b>Nobody's Perfect</b>	<b>Mother Goose</b>
Visits	1351	317	195	98	27	247
Hours	3043	391	390	196	50.05	370.5
Families served	108	36	29	17	4	27
Individuals served	278	87	62	36	7	58

## **Outcome Data and Client Satisfaction**

The 'ECD Family Programs Client Satisfaction Evaluation' was distributed to all program participants and the majority of families completed the evaluations. In addition to 'ECD Family Programs Client Satisfaction Evaluation', CAPC programs administered a CAPC PARENT SURVEY 2023 – 2024, online and/or hard copy to families. (PHAC collected this data, collated results, and forwarded to Purpose.)

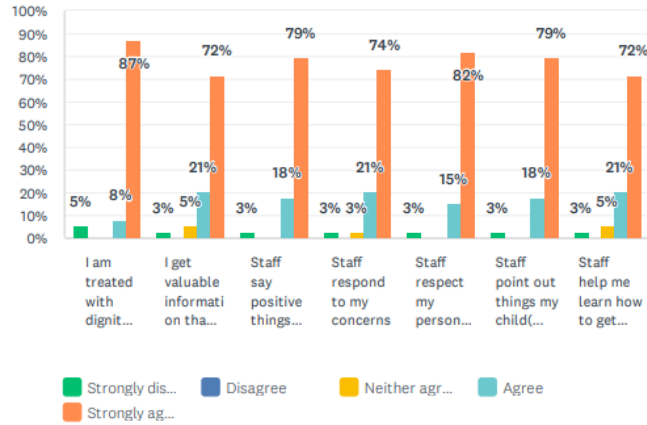
All the programs had significant increases in attendance and client engagement as noted in the evaluations.

- Pitter Patter and Family Circle had a 6% increase participation with families from the previous year and a 15% increase in events attended.
  - *"Nice to have regular routine and schedule every week. Social aspect seeing same families regularity is nice."*
  - *"I felt a sense of support and community. We looked forward to coming every week."*
  - *"It assured me that I am doing ok and inspired to keep on doing right things."*

Excerpt from CAPC Parent Survey 2023 – 2024

Q5 Thinking about all your contacts with the program staff, please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements.

Answered: 39 Skipped: 0



# Youth Addiction Programs - Burnaby Youth Custody Services

## Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024

### FROM THE DESK OF THE PROGRAM COORDINATOR

This year we welcome new team member Courtney to BYCS as we move into a new period of working with our clients in the major youth custody Centre in British Columbia. I am proud to share a vignette of the collective efforts that our Drug and Alcohol team has been making to provide unique and appropriate programming for our youth in custody. None of our efforts would be possible without the continued joint support and contributions that the caring staff at The Lower Mainland Purpose Society and Burnaby Youth Custody Services has offered.

The primary service we offer is addiction counselling and harm reduction support. Addiction counsellors support youth to increase their resilience, explore their options and reduce their risk.

We are a small team of two Full Time Youth Addiction counsellors offering a vast variety of programming to our clients. The impact of COVID-19 and the lower numbers of youth in custody, our team has suspended psychoeducational groups and currently provides all services on a one-to-one basis.

Youth are welcome to participate in individual counseling. Our services are voluntary, and youth can self-refer at any point during their time at BYCS. Over 38% of our referrals are self-referred.

Our team offers individualized support that strives to meet youth where they are at, matching their level of readiness. Youth do not need to want to make a change to connect with support: the team adopts a motivational interviewing approach and welcomes youth at any stage of change including precontemplation.

Youth work with their counselor on self-selected goals that may include relapse prevention, boredom reduction, harm reduction, building positive coping skills and community/treatment program preparation.

Our team respects youth's resilience and right to self-determination. Support is provided within the context of trauma informed, strength-based, anti-oppression, and harm reduction frameworks.

We continue to work with select youth to provide some remote aftercare and bridging support to youth after they leave custody. When appropriate within the context of the community team and youth circumstances, a time-limited, purposeful connection can help facilitate community

integration. This is explored in partnership with the youth and community care team including their probation officer and social worker.

Our counselling team is certified to offer **SMART Recovery**® programming (Self-Management and Recovery Training).

**SMART Recovery's** approach to behavioral change is built around their **4-Point Program**®: (1) Building and maintaining the motivation to change. (2) Coping with urges to use. (3) Managing thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in an effective way without addictive behaviors. (4) Living a balanced, positive, and healthy life.

Youth are supported to use the **SMART** recovery tools contained within the framework of the four-point program as part of relapse prevention and community reintegration.

**SMART Recovery** meetings are offered at community health centres across British Columbia and online. As a result, youth can continue to accessing **SMART Recovery** if they wish.

Youth are invited to participate in harm reduction education.

Our team offers training on recognizing and responding to an opioid overdose using naloxone via the BCCDC's Take Home Naloxone program.

Our team offers training on using BTX Fentanyl Test Strips and community drug testing services as part of harm reduction decision making.

Youth do not need to be seeing a counselor for ongoing individual service to access training or harm reduction supplies and training.

Through our close connection with the Lower Mainland Purpose Society's Health Contact Centre, additional harm reduction supports and trainings can be arranged upon request.

Our team partners with the BCCDC and the Health Contact Centre at the Lower Mainland Purpose Society in order to provide harm reduction supplies for youth.

Youth are eligible to receive naloxone kits and BTX fentanyl test strips upon their release from custody as part of reducing their overdose risk when they return to the community.

Through our close connection with the Lower Mainland Purpose Society's Health Contact Centre, additional harm reduction supplies can be arranged upon request.

We also train all adults working at BYCS in how to use Naloxone. We have to date trained over 165 adults and 132 youth.

Wellness Programming, Adventure Based Therapy, Art Therapy and Horticultural Therapy, Apiary Program (Bee hive Program).

As part of promoting engagement, our team strives to build positive relationships with youth and meet them where they are at. Connecting with youth often involves working within a variety of complementary modalities. The modalities listed below function as outreach to build relationships with youth our team isn't working with and as tools to supplement the work we are doing with the youth we are providing one-on-one counseling services to.

## **Adventure Based Therapy: Climbing Wall**

One of the counselors is an experienced climber with full belay and rope rescue certifications. As such, they are qualified to support youth on the BYCS climbing wall and provide individualized climbing coaching focused on both the mental and physical aspects of the sport. Youth are invited to challenge by choice: the counselor strives to create a positive therapeutic environment where youth are supported to learn new skills, take healthy risks, solve problems, build trust with staff, work through fears and achieve their goals.

Service is provided to youth on a one-on-one basis or in small groups depending on the goal of the sessions and the preferences of the youth. This program has been reduced somewhat during the past year due to the difficulty in accessing BYCS support staff to be with the Youth during out of school hours.

## **Horticultural Therapy: Garden Program**

The BYCS Programs Department, BYCS Chaplin and our team have partnered to create an outdoor space that is designed to facilitate youth connection to nature, plants and community. Youth are invited to participate in the garden space in a variety of ways. Some opportunities for participation are active, skill building and structured: youth perform tasks including building garden beds, preparing the soil for planting, planting seeds, weeding, harvesting produce, saving seeds, watering, and preparing meals using the harvested produce. Youth are also welcomed to participate in less structured and more exploratory ways: this can include walking around the garden, sitting under a tree, smelling the herbs/flowers, watching the birds or eating fresh raspberries right off the bush.

The garden includes sensory-oriented plants that provide youth with the opportunity to explore color, taste, texture, and fragrance. Counsellors empower youth to learn about and interact with herbs, vegetables, flowers, fruits, and natural ecosystems. In this way, youth build positive connections to nature and are invited to engage in grounding and mindfulness activities as part of building positive coping skills.

As being in nature and interacting with plants helps facilitate a positive therapeutic space, Counselors use the garden space as an outdoor office: youth are able to leave the building and take a breath of fresh air while receiving individualized support services.

Our team has also assisted the BYCS Chaplin with memorial services in the garden. Memorial services take place when a youth has lost a loved one or is commemorating the anniversary of a loss. During this time, the youth is invited to plant a flower to commemorate their loved one. While they are in custody, our team and the Chaplin support youth to care for the memorial plants and process their grief. During a youth's time in custody, visiting the memorial plant becomes a temporary stand-in for visiting the place where a loved one remains might be.

## **Why Beekeeping is Beneficial for our Garden and Youth.**

### **Pollination**

Your garden will thank you. Honeybees are a highly efficient pollinator that will travel over a 3-mile radius in search of blossoms. Your organic vegetable garden will show increased production and produce larger and more uniform fruits as a direct result of the honeybees' tireless work. They are responsible for pollinating  $\frac{1}{3}$  of the crops that we eat, including almonds, apples, strawberries, and so much more!

### **Make An Impact**

Starting beekeeping is not only beneficial to your vegetable garden, but to the species itself. Honeybees play a critical role in our ecosystem and food systems, but are facing more threats than ever. In 2019, 40% of honeybees did not survive the winter. We are helping to expand the honeybee population and improve their health. Our local ecosystem will benefit from the increased pollination and biodiversity.

### **Experience**

A beehive brings an educational and rewarding experience to Youth. We offer the opportunity to witness young bees taking their first orientation flights, house bees removing debris from the hive, and nurse bees tending to the young. You may even see the infamous 'waggle dance' that forager bees use to communicate the direction and distance to new food sources! Bee care is also an excellent way to build our relationships with the youth we are working with as they learn new skills!

### **Honey**

We harvest once per year. Cap, spin and pour into jars. We sell the honey in house and place the proceeds back into the now sustainable North Arm Apiary Program.

### **Wellness Program: Run, Walk, Talk**

Our team uses the BYCS outdoor track to engage youth in running and/or walking programming. As physical and mental wellness are intimately linked, counsellors encourage youth to build healthy habits and prosocial coping skills by building habits around physical activity.

Counsellors on the team have some experience with distance running and can accompany youth on runs around the track and assist with them developing and maintaining a personal running practice.

Additionally, our team uses the track as an office space to provide individualized support services. Getting some fresh air and going for a walk around the track can create a positive therapeutic space.

## Interdisciplinary and Interdepartmental Connections

The counselling team understands that youth are best supported when they have caring adults working together as part of a team. Our team actively engages with a variety of other departments at BYCS and with youth community care teams when appropriate. By functioning as an active part of the BYCS community, counsellors build relationships with youth and staff. These relationships facilitate referrals and increase opportunities for wrap-around support. Our counselling team regularly participates in community team lead Integrated Case Management Meetings, weekly BYCS Case Management Meetings and the program coordinator attends the daily BYCS management meeting. As such, we are an integrated part of the BYCS community and are able to work in a way that supports a youth's care plan while being responsive to dynamics within the custody centre environment.

**THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP WITH FRASER PARK SECONDARY**, one of the counsellors provides support for the beekeeping program. This support includes mentoring youth and tending to the bees while the head beekeeper is out of the office.

**THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP WITH FRASER PARK SECONDARY**, our team provides classroom and special event support as needed. This could include providing the youth with urgent emotional support during class, acting as a positive role models during activities or celebrating student achievements at school events.

**THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ELDERS AND INDIGENOUS CULTURAL LIAISONS**, our team participates alongside youth in programming (such as drum building) and ceremonies (including smudges, cedar brushing and sweat lodge). In this way, counsellors deepen their ability to work in a culturally safe manner and create a more open climate for youth to explore culture, identity, and connection as part of working through substance use concerns.

**THROUGH A PARTNERSHIP WITH THE BYCS PROGRAMMING DEPARTMENT**, counsellors participate in custody special events and recreational activities.

One of the counselors is involved as a facilitator with the BYCS Chapter of the Boys Club Network. In this context, they partner with staff from Fraser Park Secondary, the BYCS Chaplin and the Boys Club Network Community to facilitate programming that empowers boys in custody.

## **STAFF SUPPORT SERVICES AND TRAINING**

Counsellors work with BYCS Staff and Community ISSP workers to provide harm reduction support and education. Our counselling team provides naloxone kits and trains staff on how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose via the BCCDC's Take Home Naloxone program

### **What We Do**

We offer Drug and Alcohol Counselling Services including one-on-one counselling, harm reduction support, naloxone training through the Take Home Naloxone Program and group based programming. Our team is based out of Burnaby Youth Custody Services. We work with incarcerated youth aged 12 -20 during their time in custody. Burnaby Youth Custody Services is one of two youth custody centres in British Columbia. As a result, youth connecting with our program come from all over the province.

### **Naloxone Training**

We offer 1:1 naloxone training as part of the Take Home Naloxone Program. Any youth that is currently in custody is eligible for training: we train youth regardless of their current involvement with drugs and promote the training as an important part of creating caring communities. During training, the impact that being in custody has on opioid tolerance is explored and we work with youth on harm reduction strategies. Upon completion of training, a naloxone kit is placed with the youth's personal belongings so that when they leave custody, they leave with a naloxone kit. As part of International Overdose Awareness Day, our team puts on a series of "Overdose Drills" where trained youth have the opportunity to take on a leadership role in responding to a simulated overdose. Teams of youth successfully demonstrated their learning and encouraged their peers to learn more. To date we have trained over 130 Youth and over 160 Adults with how to use Naloxone.

### **Referrals**

We work with youth and their community care teams to create meaningful and realistic release plans. As part of the planning process, youth may wish to engage with community based services (AA, NA and counselling etc.) or residential treatment. Our staff connect with youth, care teams and service providers in order to assist with completing referrals and creating youth safety plans. In order to build strong working relationships and stay current on the services available to youth, program staff attend treatment centre open houses and invite staff from programs to attend the custody centre and market their programs directly. When appropriate, we are able to accompany youth on supervised leaves from custody to attend NA/AA meetings or appointments.

### **Individual Counselling**

Our team works with youth on a 1:1 basis to provide drug and alcohol counselling. Counselling can be short term or longer term depending on the needs of the individual youth and the

length of their stay in custody. Counsellors work with youth on exploring their current situation and dreams for the future. Counsellors seek to meet youth where they are at, working alongside them to increase resilience and reduce risk. Counsellors are trained in Motivational Interviewing and our work is informed by the Transtheoretical Model of Change.

### **Outreach and Continued Contact/Support in the Community**

As we can build lasting professional working relationships with our youth, we have been requested to case management and Youth Probation Officers to continue contact with some of our clients once they have returned to their communities. We have utilized both phone and video to connect with the youth during the past 12 months.

### **Combatting the Opioid Overdose Epidemic**

The 2023 fiscal year presented our team with significant challenges, our programming and participants were deeply impacted by the ongoing drug poisoning crisis and ongoing larger social conversation around navigating current and historic injustice.

- Our team worked closely with the school and correctional staff to provide services. Partnership projects included involvement in facilitating activities with Boys Club Network and participating actively in special events (including cultural activities, holidays, birthdays, talent shows and track events). Our team partnered the Chaplin to work with youth around grief and loss: this includes planting flowers in memory of loved ones.
- Our team has observed an increase in the number of youth we work with who have experienced an overdose and/or drug poisoning in the community. For some youth, these events are catalysts for change and encourage youth to work with our team to prepare to enter residential treatment. Other youth are not ready to stop using: our team supports these youths to work on responsive and realistic planning to increase safety and reduce risk. Harm reduction support includes naloxone training and providing naloxone kits as well as using motivational interviewing techniques to engage in safety planning. Our staff faced the challenge of remaining client-centered and meeting youth where they are in the face of the risk the youth face when they return to the community.

Due to the high level of risk the ever-changing drug supply presents, not all the youth who have accessed support through our program have survived this challenging time. Our team would like to take a moment to acknowledge the loss of youth and offer deep condolences to all who are touch by these losses. In addition to the impact that loss has on staff, most of our program participants know at least one person who has died this year as a result of the toxic drug supply. Youth are increasingly dealing with the premature loss of peers, family members and

other contacts. Working through and processing these losses is part of the support youth receive through our program.

Sincerely,

Paul Blunden

Drug and Alcohol Program Co-ordinator



## The Numbers at a Glance

### Program Service Hours\*

This program provided 472.75 hours of direct service and 776.5 hours of indirect service totaling 1249.25 hours.

*CWT Service Type	1 to 1 hours	Non Client Specific Hours	Total	INDIRECT Service Hours
Therapeutic Intervention	472.75	776.5	1249.25	

### Referrals

**71** Total Referrals

**16** females served

**54** males served

**1** Trans and Non-Binary

**10** Aboriginal Females served

**33** Aboriginal Males served



## Referral Source Breakdown

- 38% self-referred.

Referral Source	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Mental Health/ Health	1	3	0	0	0	2	0	5	1	2	4	3
Case Management	1	4	2	0	0	2	2	1	2	2	3	2
Social Worker/ Native Liaison	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3
Self	2	3	4	0	0	3	0	5	2	2	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>

## Group Service

Group Service	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Naloxone training youth	1	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1
Naloxone training Staff	0	0	3	0	0	11	9	5	1	0	0	0

## Referrals to Treatment Programs/Outpatient Counselling

A total of **23 REFERRALS** were assisted/completed by the D&A program to the treatment programs listed:

<b>Program</b>	<b># of Referrals</b>
<b>180 Degrees</b> (Campbell River, BC)	3
<b>Westminster House</b> (New Westminster, BC)	0
<b>Boys and Girls Club</b> (Victoria BC)	2
<b>Creekside Stabilization Services</b> (Surrey, BC)	1
<b>Daughters and Sisters</b> (Surrey, BC)	6
<b>Fraser Health Substance Use Counselling</b> (Surrey, BC)	1
<b>Last Door Youth Treatment Program</b> (New Westminster, BC)	0
<b>The Foundry</b> (North Vancouver, BC)	1
<b>Oasis</b> (Campbell River, BC)	0
<b>Odyssey Counselling</b> (Burnaby, BC)	0
<b>PCRS Youth counselling</b> (Vancouver, BC)	1
<b>PLEA Supportive Recovery Housing</b> (Vancouver, BC)	1
<b>Waypoint</b> (Surrey, BC)	7

# HEALTH VAN WITH PURPOSE ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024



## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Fraser Health Authority funds the Health Van. It is a mobile harm reduction vehicle operated by a team of dedicated Outreach Workers and is in operation seven nights a week, rain or shine, from 11:00 a.m. to 01:00 a.m. The van covers New Westminster, Burnaby, Tri-Cities, Maple Ridge and Pitt Meadows.

Used sharps are collected, overdoses are responded to, drug-checking is performed, Naloxone (medication administered to reverse an opioid overdose) is distributed and supplies for safer inhalation, injection, snorting and sex are delivered to various established Satellite Sites, to housed/unhoused people who use drugs and to people undergoing hormone replacement therapy.

**Many clients of the Health Van live colourful lives and tell us vivid tales of past worlds and loved ones lost. The Van Team supports people in their current situation and accepts them without judgement. This means accepting a person and their drug-use or their hormone replacement therapy journey and working with a harm reduction model to prevent injury, illness and death.**

### **ITEM 3 OPERATING HIGHLIGHTS**

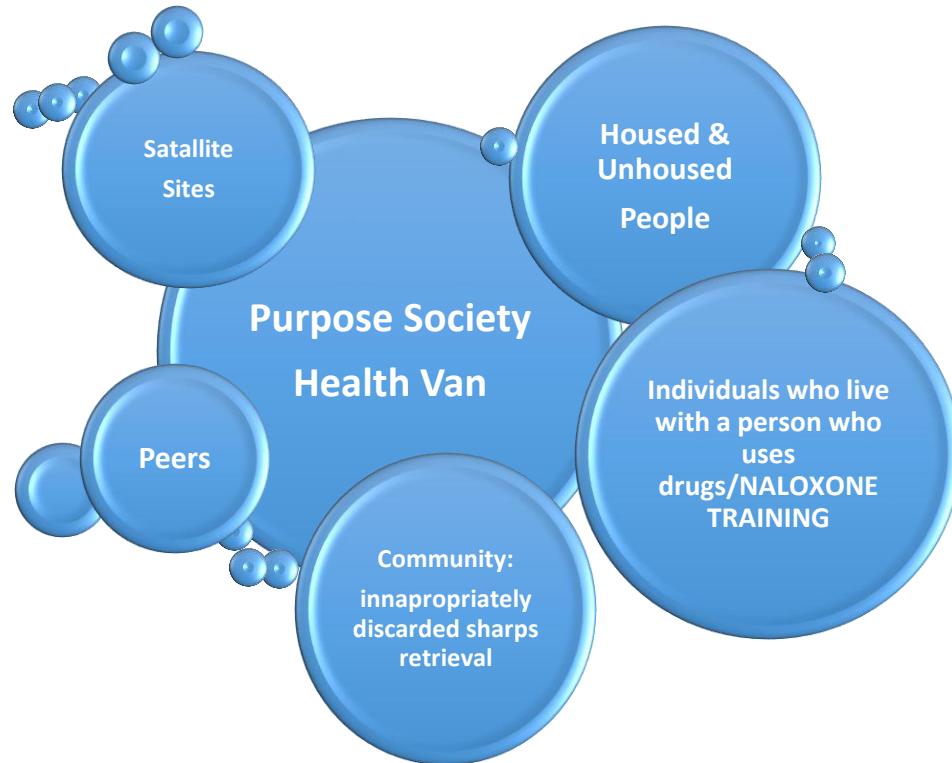
**Purpose’s harm reduction program is possibly the only non-profit in the Fraser Health north region to gain access to a supply of nasal naloxone kits.** The kits are primarily distributed to youth and people with hand/arm mobility issues and for those individuals with trypanophobia (anxiety experienced specifically related to needles used during a vaccination or other medical procedure) who could otherwise not be trained because of the invasive nature of injecting intramuscular naloxone. **Purpose has successfully trained ~150 youths in the administration of nasal naloxone!**

**Those same youth for the most part, also received a newly developed “Drugs 101 – Drugs and Their Effects” training. The training included instruction and distribution of Fentanyl drug checking strips, tips to identify counterfeit prescription drugs, drug classifications and the effects of said drugs. Knowledge is power.**

### **Product Distribution and Services**

**“Purpose’s harm reduction program is possibly the only non-profit in the Fraser Health north region to gain access to a supply of nasal naloxone kits”.**

The Health Van distributes supplies for safer sex, snorting, inhalation and injecting, including: 1cc sharps, .5cc sharps, 3 and 5 ml barrels, various size of screw-tip needles for barrels, colour-coded snorting straws, tourniquets, cookers, water vials, alcohol pads, straight pipes, bubble pipes, foil, push sticks, screens, four sizes of sharps containers, fentanyl drug checking kits to-go, on-the-spot Fentanyl strip drug-checking, Naloxone, overdose response and training, lubed condoms, flavoured condoms, female condoms, lubrication, masks, snacks, pads, tampons, oral care supplies, wound care supplies, basic wound care, pet food, coats, blankets, mitts, toques, and socks/underwear. Health Van service is provided to people with the attention and respect they deserve.



## HIGHLIGHTS AND OVERVIEW

### Clients

**Van Outreach Workers met with 7,374 clients (an increase of 177% from the same 12-month reporting period last year) from clients requesting the Health Van services.** The drastic increase in the amount of clients served can be attributed to a change in record keeping. For more accurate reporting, van drivers are now recording the amount of people served from a single call. For example, one person from a house where 10 people require supplies will contact the Health Van on behalf of all, therefore, drivers record 10 people served, rather than one. **The busiest city to least-busy city was New Westminster (2,475 clients met), Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows (2,265 clients met) Burnaby (1,946 clients met) then the Tri-Cities (688 clients met).**

### Satellite Sites

The Health Van delivers harm reduction supplies to many established satellite sites within the cities it serves. These sites include mental health and addictions centres under the umbrella of Fraser Health, emergency departments at hospitals, modular housing facilities, various types of shelters and single-room occupancy housing. Statistics for Satellite Sites are included throughout this report. **Satellite Sites easily and efficiently order supplies and request sharps**

disposal by logging onto <http://www.harmreductionsupplies.org> (first of its kind harm reduction supply website, developed right here at Purpose Society).

## **Naloxone Distribution, Training and Overdose Response**

Stride Outreach Mobile Harm Reduction Program distributed **12,646 Naloxone kits, an increase of 19% from the same reporting period last year.** This number includes kits used for Naloxone training (~1,000), distribution to clients from the van (1556) and delivery of kits to various satellite sites (10,090). **~1000 people have been thoroughly trained how to recognize and respond to an opioid overdose** with rescue breathes and Naloxone. **Van Outreach Workers responded to 21 overdoses** with Naloxone and rescue breaths.

## **Sharps Collection and Distribution**

### ***Collection:***

Van Outreach Workers safely collected and disposed of *188,603 used syringes, a significant decrease from 275,487* during the same reporting period last year. It is reasonable to attribute the decrease to a drop in needle-use to the sharp increase of a preference to inhale drugs, rather than inject. The preference from injecting to inhaling is validated and in alignment with the B.C. Coroners Service reports, where the Mode of Consumption in deaths related to a toxic drug supply, in the Fraser Health Region has risen to 74% in January 2024, from 56% in 2021:

<https://app.powerbi.com/view?r=eyJrljoiZTBIZDRmOGUtZGNjOC00NTVklTliYTctYmQwNzIxMzNiZDE0IiwidCI6IjZmZGI1MjAwLTNkMGQtNGE4YS1iMjM1OWFkYyJ9>

- Injection has declined from 39% in 2016 to 20% in 2021; and
- Smoking has increased from 29% to 56% during the same period
- In 2021, smoking was the leading mode of consumption in all Health Services Delivery Area [Illicit Drug Mode of Consumption \(gov.bc.ca\)](https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/illlicit-drug-mode-of-consumption)

This collection number includes syringe-returns from satellite sites mostly, people on hormone replacement therapy, from people who use syringes to inject their drugs and the 21 “rig sweeps” conducted per week.

## Distribution

A total of 136,386 sterile syringes were distributed from the van to people who requested them and to satellite sites. The reporting period from last year, indicates 128,067 sterile needles were distributed. While there was an increase of 8,319 sterile syringes distributed, it is reasonable to attribute this to a high number of Emergency Shelters that Purpose Society supplied non-typical/large amounts of supplies to and a noticeable increase of individuals accessing needles for hormone replacement therapy. While this year's numbers are higher than last years, distribution of needles has decreased significantly from previous years reporting.

Number of Referrals 2022-2023	Number of Referrals 2023-2024
906	385
479	70
537	50
150	6

## Referrals

Drivers are trained and provided with the tools necessary to carry out on-the-spot referrals. In previous years, the range of resources were helping people clean “street-feet” wounds and abscesses formed at a person’s injection site on their body, assessing suicidal ideation, finding temporary/permanent housing, assisting with detox admissions/drug and alcohol counselling, ID replacement and more. As accessible services/resources steadily decline, so do the following stats:

## Contributing Variables

- 1) Health Services – decrease in numbers could be reflective of the loss of Purpose’s low-barrier, weekly medical clinic and that all low-barrier medical resources across the Fraser Health Authority and Vancouver Coastal Health Authority have excessively dwindled.
- 2) Homelessness/Shelter – drastic decrease is directly related to a lack of shelter spaces, anywhere... including outside of Fraser Health Authority region. There simply is not enough “beds” for people who are experiencing homelessness.
- 3) Mental Health/Addiction – mainly referrals to Purpose’s PACT program (Peer Assisted Care Team is a mobile, community-led team that offers support to individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance use crisis). Because it is now next to impossible to refer any drug-user into a detox/rehab program, Van Outreach Workers WERE able to refer individuals to Drug and Alcohol Counselling, but that option is no longer available as a resource.

4) Sex/Other- Van Outreach Drivers still assist individuals with Bad Date Reporting and referrals to clinics where sexual health is the primary care, but there are very few sexual health clinics available with reasonable working hours and most are only open one day per week. Drivers will refer clients to a clinic that is open in four days from the referral date (conversation between Driver/Client), but Driver-Client follow-up is consistent with the same outcome: client forgot or missed when the clinic was operating.

## **Drug Checking**

In December 2022, Purpose Society was the first organization in the North Fraser Health region to house and operate a FTIR Spectrometer used for drug checking (FTIR machine funded by the Fraser Health Authority). The Ministry of Transportation granted Purpose Society the opportunity to collect and transport drug samples legally. Through a Chain of Custody procedure, van drivers can deliver samples back to Purpose Society, where a trained technician can analyze and interpret drugs, cuts and adulterants in samples and quickly deliver results to clients via text, email or phone call. *Moving forward to 2023*, the Health Van acquired its own drug-checking machine called a SCATR, which can be independently operated from the Health Authority. An application with the Federal Government for the approval of mobile drug checking is in process for approval (still waiting!). Purpose Society is the first organization of any kind, in all of Western Canada to operate a SCATR drug-checking machine. Purpose will also be pioneers in the design and implementation of a mobile drug-checking program with the Federal Government and will be the first in Western Canada to operate. Learn about the SCATR machine here: <https://scatr.ca/>.

## **PERSONNEL**

### **Van Team**

- A comprehensive training booklet has been developed for drivers. Emphasis on van and personal safety, safe sharps retrieval, client boundaries, what to do in the event of a needle poke, how to complete paperwork/shift reports/stats and proper collection of drug samples are at the forefront of training. Drivers complete the training booklet three times totaling a minimum of 21 hours of training: once with the Program Coordinator (in addition to Naloxone training and a review of Purpose Society's Policy and Procedures Manual during this session), and two full-shifts on the van with seasoned drivers. New van drivers are monitored by the Program Coordinator for several weeks, post-hire
- The Health Van currently has four drivers (Outreach Workers), plus a Harm Reduction Program Coordinator

- Two drivers have three evening shifts per week
- Drivers are trained in basic wound care and have the OPTION to choose to provide wound care
- Drivers are thoroughly trained in overdose response and are certified and up-to-date in First Aid
- One driver delivers to satellite sites and clients on Mondays and Thursdays during the day
- There is emphasis on communication between the coordinator and the drivers via an on-line shift report. View here: <https://forms.gle/WbCZcGapNGZKrW3bA> . The shift report highlights safety and emotional well-being of the drivers, giving drivers the opportunity to request a de-brief with the coordinator, should they need it
- A tracking app has been downloaded on the Health Van phone as a safety feature
- Drivers and coordinator have participated in a self-defense course
- Coordinator and drivers engage in regular conversations about client interactions, client needs and driver needs
- Coordinator stays vigilant in regard to maintaining professional driver-client boundaries
- Driver-retention is high. There is not a consistent turnaround, which can be an indicator of job/organizational satisfaction

## Vision for Upcoming Year

To finally launch a Mobile Drug Checking service with the SCATR machine, with the primary focus on groups at highest risk of overdose mortality (housed people, construction sites, etc.), to continue to build meaningful, positive relationships with clients/satellite sites/community/Fraser Health Authority and to effectively serve as many clients as possible.

### ITEM 4 CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

- 1) The nature of the job can lead to emotional exhaustion
- 2) Drivers risk of exposure to *blood borne pathogens/illness whilst responding to overdoses*
- 3) Regular exposure to clients during a mental health crisis/break
- 4) Risk of car accidents
- 5) An unforeseen lack or cease of program funding/support

## ITEM 5 TAKEAWAYS

The Health Van's services are necessary and crucial in reducing the harms associated with a toxic drug supply. While health and housing/shelter resources have critically deteriorated, the Health Van continues to be in high demand to serve clients with the most basic needs. Harm reduction works and the Health Van is directly responsible for saving many lives.

“While health and housing/shelter resources have critically deteriorated, the Health Van continues to be in high demand to serve clients with the most basic needs”

# Health Contact Centre

2023-2024 Annual Report

## Program Description

The Health Contact Centre (HCC) is open every day from 8:00 am to 10:30 pm. We provide a variety of services related to harm reduction, including witnessed consumption for people injecting drugs. We also provide unused harm reduction supplies for injection and inhalation, take home naloxone kits and training in overdose response, service referrals and resource information, and coffee and snacks. Our HCC Outreach program currently operates 7 days a week, with workers out in the community every day from 7:00am to 3:00pm, providing harm reduction supplies, information about resources, and promoting our services. We also provide on-site FTIR spectrometer drug checking.

## Highlights of the Past Year

The most significant change to our services in the past year has been the expansion of HCC hours into the morning and afternoon. We have extended our service schedule from 3:30 pm-10:30 pm to 8:00 am to 10:30 pm daily, more than doubling the hours that we can provide this vital, lifesaving service (from 7 hours to 14.5 hours per day). Over the course of our three years, we have seen, through reports and requests from participants and the amount of harm reduction supply kits being distributed by our outreach workers during the day, that there is a need for these services outside of our original limited hours of operation. We have been running at this new schedule for just over a month now, and have seen our traffic during the 8:00 am to 3:00 pm hours increase steadily during that time.

Unfortunately, the expanded hours have come with a decrease in our staffing numbers on each shift from four Harm Reduction Workers (HRW) to three HRWs. This has been an adjustment, but we have taken steps, through newly implemented protocols around break procedures and outdoor toxic drug Overdose response to ensure that staff safety is supported and service levels have not been affected.

## Personnel

The HCC currently has a permanent staff of 16 people, including 1 Coordinator, 4 Senior Harm Reduction Workers, 9 Harm Reduction Workers, and 2 Daytime Outreach Workers. As well, 3 of our Senior HRWs also work shifts as HRWs. In addition, we current have 5 casual/on-call HRWs to cover shifts as needed. We also have 7 volunteers assisting both on-site in the HCC and with our Outreach program.

## Outputs and Outcomes

Between April 1, 2023 and March 31, 2024 the Health Contact Centre had 1,819 visits accessing the witnessed consumption services and 156 new participant intakes. Staff responded to 52 toxic drug overdose events on site and in the surrounding area. None of these events resulted in death.

HCC and Outreach staff provided 20,893 bubble pipes and smoking harm reduction kits, 2,997 injecting harm reduction kits, and 2,765 take home naloxone kits.

Additionally, during this period, HCC and Outreach staff made 1,904 referrals to a wide variety of services.

## Visions for the Upcoming Year

Over the coming year, I would like to see us continue to advocate for expanding our services to include witnessed inhalation. Extending the HCC hours of operation has covered a major gap for our participants, but perhaps an even greater gap is the fact that we cannot support community members who main or only method of consumption is smoking their drugs in the same way as those who inject. Recently, in particular over the last year, we have seen much higher numbers of clients smoking over injecting. This is reflected in the far greater amount of harm reduction supplies we distribute for smoking versus supplies for injecting. More significantly, staff are responding to toxic drug events offsite with much higher frequency than inside the HCC. This is almost entirely due to people smoking outside, unable to access the witness consumption services we provide. This is less safe for participants, staff and the greater community, and ultimately defeats the purpose of having an OPS.

I understand that the major barriers preventing this expansion are funding, and finding/converting adequate space. It is also significant, though, that the City of New Westminster supports this initiative, as it did the expanded HCC hours, having included them in its Homelessness Action Strategy, detailing its plan to addresses issues related to homelessness

in New Westminster in the coming years. As well, all parties, including the city and health authority, recognize the need for expanded harm reduction services for inhalation drug use. I believe it is worthwhile to continue pursuing this.

Beyond this, I would like to see us continue to serve our participants with empathy and efficiency, with a well-trained, professional, stable and supportive staff.

# New Westminster Overdose Community Action Team (NWOCAT)

April 2023 – March 2024

## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The New Westminster Overdose Community Action Team (NWOCAT) operates under the Community Action Initiative (CAI) and aims to bring together a diverse network of organizations, community members and people with lived or living experience, to combat the ongoing drug toxicity crisis and develop projects that can help to fight stigma within our community. Three projects currently operate under the CAT program: the Anti-Stigma Campaigns, The Peer Network and The Digital Inclusion Project.

## HIGHLIGHTS/OVERVIEW


### Partnership with Douglas College for a Device Drive

In **June 2023**, three Douglas College business students reached out to Lola to contribute to the Digital Inclusion Project by hosting a cell phone drive at both Douglas College campuses. The Digital Inclusion Project purchased four mailboxes that provided a safe and secure way for people to drop off their donated phones. These boxes were placed at Douglas College campuses, Good Omen, and Queensborough Community Centre, two additional community-centered locations that receive a lot of foot traffic.




 douglascollelibrary • Follow ...

 douglascollelibrary 19h  
Give your old devices a second life!  
Students are organizing a device drive to support Purpose Society's Digital Inclusion Project. @purposedigitalhub  
Donate your gently-used cell phone at the front desk of either campus library.

6 likes  
19 HOURS AGO

 Add a comment... 

### International Overdose Awareness Day

In **August 2023**, the NWOCAT and the Mobile Harm Reduction Team hosted a citywide Naloxone Training event led by Kristina Selby-Brown (Coordinator: Purpose Harm Reduction Program) at Moody Park to commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day. The event had over a hundred (100+) attendees, including New Westminster MLA Jennifer Whiteside and Mayor of New Westminster, Patrick Johnstone.

CBC coverage: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a9XD62x832E>



Article: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/purpose-society-naloxone-training-overdose-awareness-day-1.6953666>

Article by Ria Renouf for the New West Anchor: <https://newwestanchor.com/p/guinness-world-record-international-overdose-awareness-day-2023>

### Homelessness Action Week 2023

In **October 2023**, the NWOCAT participated in New Westminster's Homelessness Action Week (HAW), which sees communities around the province raise awareness around homelessness by hosting a variety of events to engage the community and support vulnerable community members. The organization previously scheduled to provide free hair wash + haircuts to street-trenched folks could not make it this year, so the NWOCAT sourced volunteers and provided this service instead to fourteen (14) community members. Along with hair services, the NWOCAT also assembled thirty (30) personal hygiene kits using unopened products donated by the community.



The NWOCAT also participated in a Community Party on the last day of HAW, which was hosted at Holy Trinity Cathedral and featured a dinner, live music, and performances. One participant, a member of Peer Network, shed a few tears on her way out of the hall. She said it's been a long time since she's been to an event like this, surrounded by her community and able to relax and enjoy herself for a night. She's usually hyper-vigilant on the street, as many of our clients are, and this was a place where she could feel safe and participate in something more. Another fellow who participated in karaoke also really enjoyed himself, and said although he felt nervous performing at first, he settled into it and was grateful for the experience to express himself.



Lola and Sydney Andrews at the Community Party

## Facilitated peer involvement in Legal Aid BC Research

In **January 2024**, Legal Aid BC researchers reached out to Lola to ask for participants on a project studying experiences of people who have issues related to the criminalization of drugs/substances and the revolving door of criminalization. The researchers were invited to meet Peer Network participants and invite them to participate in the study. To ensure this was ethical research, interviewees were compensated with a cash honorarium and were consulted in how much they were comfortable sharing along the process of the study.

Eddie, a long-time client of Purpose, was chosen by the researchers to share his experience with legal aid.



Eddie

Age: 60 | Gender: male  
Identifies as:  
Normandy French / Scottish

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Received legal aid in:  
Metro Vancouver region

First legal aid contact:  
42 years ago (age 18)

# of cases: Several, all led to probation

# of lawyers: A few but "one true lawyer" (helped with 4 cases, including his divorce) 1 in Alberta

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**LEGAL AID SERVICES EXPERIENCED:**

- Advice at the time of arrest / legal aid hotline
- Duty counsel representation / advice
- Representation for a case
- Applied for legal aid in person or by phone
- Help from legal aid in finding a lawyer

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"I had an ulcer and I couldn't eat, and drinking was the only thing I could do to get me out of the pain. I got pigeonholed as an alcoholic again."

**"I take my freedom seriously. That's why I live the way I do now."**

Eddie is an artist, a communicator, a dad and an uncle. He has a deep connection with nature and rivers and used to live on a 40-foot boat on the Fraser. He had a hard start in life and was in contact with the law often, but it was always handled as 'just boys having fun'. His last serious experience was sixteen years ago, when a dispute with his tenants and the police led to charges, bruises, and eventually a divorce and a lost home. He's had a few lawyers, but one stands out as his 'one true lawyer', the legal aid lawyer who listened to him and believed him, who he went on to hire for his divorce. He has lost a lot and these days he is trying to connect to his purpose, working on himself with mindfulness and meditation, getting music therapy through karaoke, and trying to be more social.

**WHAT HAS YOUR LIFE BEEN LIKE?**



"Growing up, I didn't know what to expect. It hailed the day I was born."

"I have an emotional side. I don't think that's a weakness."

"This is where I am right now. Stuck in a state of confusion."



"The system has taken away. Betrayal has taken away."

## SERVICE JOURNEY STORIES

**My Only True Lawyer** "I only ever had one true lawyer. I still consider her as such. I'm not sure what happened to her. She left the firm she was with. She was very disappointed with how the crown prosecutor railroaded me. She knew me at that point, had seen me through my divorce, and she realized I was telling her the truth."

**She Believed Me** "She was a very active lawyer. She was active with legal aid at the

time. The first time we met, I was in pretrial. I told her my story and I showed her the bruise from my arrest, and she nearly fainted. She seemed very intelligent and I believed that she believed me. I find women communicate better. They're more emotionally intelligent."

**The Expensive Lawyer** "My brother got me an expensive lawyer for one of my charges. I wasn't impressed. He got me off on it, but he dragged his ass. He didn't spend the same amount of time on my case. Never even talked to me, never knew me."

### FEEDBACK FOR LEGAL AID SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

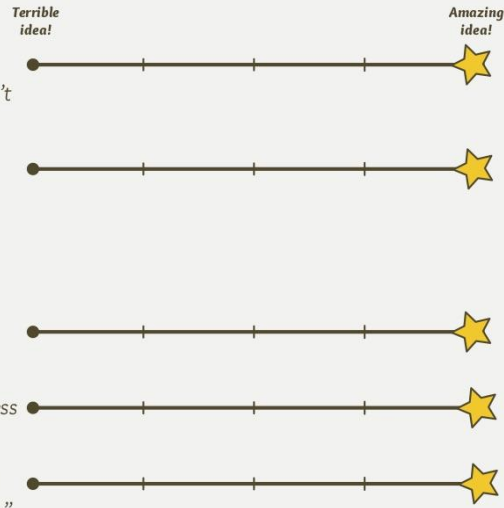
**Longer contracts for lawyers (more hours per case).** "I don't know how much time they need. My lawyer didn't have any problem with the time."

**Working with the same lawyer across multiple cases.** "Very important. If you don't agree with you lawyer, you might want to change them. Or they might want to change you. In my case, having the same lawyer was a strength."

**Specialized training for lawyers.** "If they need it, they shouldn't be a lawyer. Caring is important."

**Helping people get access to other services.** "Awareness of the needs should be there. Shelters, 12-step."

**Integrating legal aid with other services.** "They should know who they're dealing with and know all the services."



### WHAT HAVE YOUR EXPERIENCES WITH LEGAL AID BEEN LIKE?



"Being misunderstood is not a good place to be."  
"Discomforting. Not just the legal system, but society itself."



"My belief system is the circle of life."  
"I've come to believe my life has stages."

## ‘Phones for Health’ – expanding the Digital Inclusion Project

In **February 2024**, social work staff at St. Paul’s Hospital of Providence Health Care reached out to Lola to inquire about starting their own Digital Inclusion program at the hospital to keep patients/clients in touch with their social workers and medical teams. Previously, social work staff at Providence have been requesting devices for their clients via the Digital Inclusion Project. This transition to start their own program, Phones for Health, was particularly inspiring, as it demonstrated how the Digital Inclusion Project, which was originally developed within Peer Network to assist street-entrenched populations stay connected during the COVID-19 pandemic, has the potential to grow and be adapted for diverse populations and settings across Vancouver. The expansion of this initiative highlights its flexibility and impact, showing that the foundational idea of bridging digital divides can be a powerful tool for improving access to care and support to various populations. Thus, a partnership between Providence Health and Purpose Society was born, where donated devices at St. Paul’s are split between the two organizations equally.

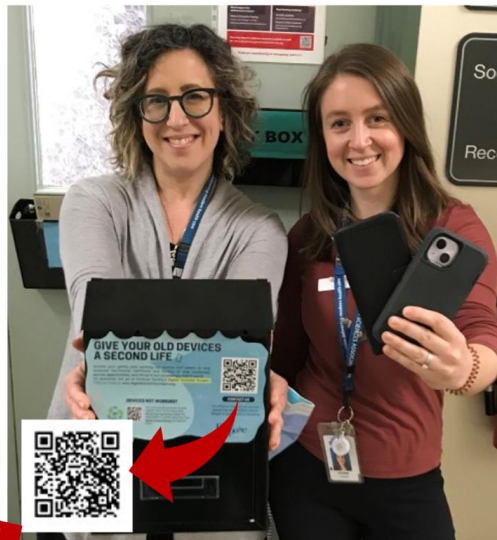
### Donate your old personal phones & devices to the **Phones for Health** project

Over 800 people a year who seek care at St. Paul’s Hospital **do not have a phone**. Many reside in low-income or precarious housing situations, making it difficult to connect with essential healthcare services post-discharge. Phones for Health is a pilot project that provides free cell phones to those in need.

We are partnering with the **Digital Inclusion Project** to collect old personal phones to refurbish & redistribute to people in need. This initiative fosters stronger connections between patients, their communities, and healthcare promoting better health outcomes while advancing our **environmental sustainability** goals through **waste reduction** and **reuse**.

**ACTION:** If you have an old personal phone or tablet you want to donate to our Phones for Health Project, please drop off to the **Social Work Office (Burrard, Room 382)**.

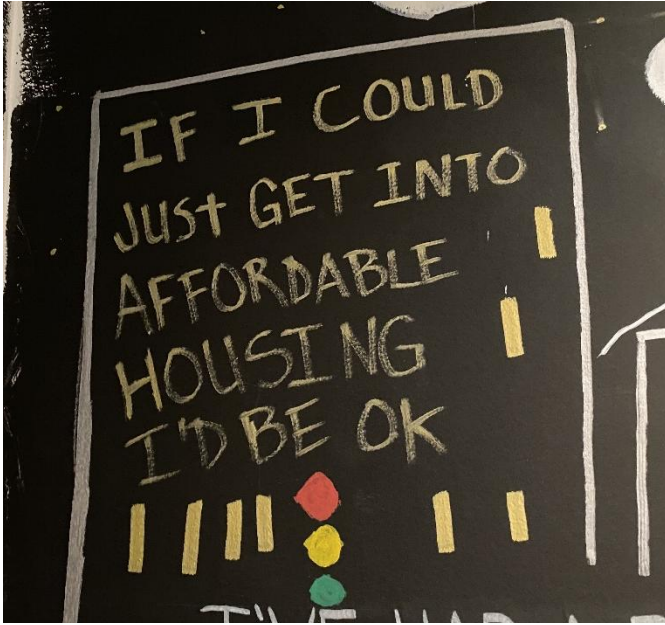
Device Donation FAQs → <https://www.digitalinclusionproject.org/donate>



## Housing Values – Anvil Centre Exhibit

In **March 2024**, Peer Network participants visited the 'Housing Values' exhibit at the Anvil Centre. The exhibit featured two galleries that examined ideas around housing in New Westminster and how cultural values, economics, and history influence where and how we live in this city. The exhibit also featured 36' x 9' mural completed by PJ Patten, dedicated to "all who lived and died on the streets". This Peer Network day-trip offered a rare opportunity for marginalized community members to visit a public space such as museum gallery while feeling comfortable and safe in a group.





## PERSONNEL

The CAT projects team consists of two peer support workers, Colin Levers and De-Anne Bolwell, along with Lola Ječmenica, the NWOCAT coordinator.

In their roles as peer support workers, Colin and De-Anne provide vital assistance to individuals who may be street-entrenched and actively struggling with addiction. This support goes beyond mere encouragement; they actively engage in facilitating referrals, answering tech-related questions in the Digital Inclusion Hub, aiding in the completion of housing forms, and assisting with various tasks necessary for navigating through the complex systems they encounter. Their commitment extends to addressing the multifaceted needs of individuals facing challenges related to homelessness and addiction, ensuring they receive the necessary support and guidance to navigate the often intricate and bureaucratic systems in place. Through their efforts, Colin and De-Anne play a crucial role in empowering individuals to access the resources and assistance they require on their journey toward stability and well-being.

## OUTPUTS AND OUTCOMES

### Peer Network

#### Outputs:

- Attendance at the weekly meetings of the Peer Network ranged between fifteen and twenty-five (15-25) members throughout the fiscal year.

#### Outcomes:

- There is a heightened trust in social service providers among participants in the Peer Network. Members of the Peer Network trust Purpose staff and turn to us whenever they require assistance.

The impact extends beyond trust, fostering a stronger sense of connection among peers in the community. This, in turn, contributes to an increased sense of belonging for members of the Peer Network.

### Digital Inclusion

#### Outputs:

- From April 2023 to March 2024, the Digital Inclusion Hub has had one-hundred and fifty-six (156) visits and distributed one-hundred and ninety-five (195) devices.
- From April 2023 to March 2024, the Digital Inclusion Hub received:
  - Ten (10) desktops from the Electronic Recycling Association
  - Ten (10) cell phones from SPARC BC
  - Two (2) laptops, twenty-six (26) desktop monitors, ten (10) computers from Human IT Company
  - Twenty (20) desktops and ten (10) laptops from Douglas College
  - Four (4) desktops computers, four (4) laptops, and eleven (11) cell phones from BC Housing
  - Miscellaneous community donations from Century House, New Westminster Public Library, and Purpose Society

#### Outcomes:

- **Increased Digital Skills:** Those who have received a device reported that they have developed improved digital literacy skills, gaining confidence in using technology for various purposes such as communication, job searches, and accessing online resources.
- **Resource Access:** Street-entrenched individuals have gained access through the Digital Inclusion Hub to essential information, support services, and resources available online, contributing to their overall well-being. The Digital Inclusion team assisted in eighteen (18) housing inquiries/referrals/etc., five (5) calls to shelters, eleven (11) calls to medical facilities, including detox centers, treatment, doctors' offices, and pharmacies. They also assisted in thirty-one (31) general calls, which include calls to family, parole officers, legal aid, banks, etc. Not all calls and outcomes are recorded, as some clients wish to stay anonymous.

## Anti-Stigma Campaign

### Outputs:

- Back in 2023, the NWOCAT began the planning process to publish a zine featuring different creative works by members of Peer Network and those with lived and living experience of substance use. The zine features nineteen (19) works from twelve (12) contributors. The zine is set to be published in August 2024 to commemorate International Overdose Awareness Day. The zine will be available free at four locations across New Westminster – the New Westminster Public Library, Kinder Books, Wildfires Bookshop, and Douglas College Zine Library.

### Outcomes:

- **Empowerment and Capacity Building:** Contributors gain a sense of ownership and empowerment by sharing their experiences and creative work, which can enhance their self-esteem and develop their skills in writing, art, and storytelling.
- **Stigma Reduction:** The zine helps to humanize the experiences of people affected by the drug crisis, challenging stereotypes and reducing stigma within the community. By presenting diverse voices and narratives, it fosters greater understanding and empathy.

- **Advocacy and Visibility:** The zine amplifies the voices of those often marginalized in discussions about the drug crisis, bringing their perspectives to the forefront and advocating for change. It increases the visibility of issues related to substance use and the need for compassionate, evidence-based responses.
- **Memorialization and Healing:** By dedicating space to remember those lost to the drug toxicity crisis, the zine provides a platform for collective mourning and healing, helping contributors and readers process grief and find hope in community solidarity.

### VISION FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR

In the coming year, our primary objective is to persist in cultivating opportunities that empower our peers, fostering a heightened sense of agency among them. We will analyze the success of the zine as an anti-stigma campaign to see if there is a desire to make it a quarterly or biyearly campaign, expanding its reach to have as many diverse voices heard as possible.

Additionally, we aim to strengthen our collaborative efforts with other social services providers and the City of New Westminster's Three Crises Pilot Project to create a more unified and seamless experience for individuals navigating the social services system. This entails extending invitations to representatives from various organizations to actively participate in our Peer Network meetings and having the NWOCAT team sit in on important events and community roundtables, fostering an environment of shared learning and mutual support. Furthermore, we are exploring opportunities to bring these organizations on board for the initiation of new projects and initiatives, with the goal of filling the gaps of care in our community. Through these endeavors, we aspire to not only break down barriers but also establish a more interconnected and supportive social services landscape for those in need.



These trends and needs reflect information from LIP partners, newcomers, and other stakeholders:

- There is a noted reduction in senior caregivers coming to Canada due to the lottery system and restrictions on bringing in parents and grandparents. More are arriving on a Visitor Visa, which has implications on only one parent being able to work.
- In-person language learning classes and services in first language was a high need.
- The need for childcare so young parents can attend programs was a high need.
- There is a growing need for mental health and well-being supports, particularly for newcomer youth. Many working with students have reiterated this.
- Culturally safe training for equity-seeking groups was a high concern.
- More social inclusion programs are needed to bring newcomers and long-term residents together, including seniors. This can help newcomers find a sense of belonging.
- Newcomers are more highly skilled and qualified and are interested in higher-level jobs. They need more information about the Canadian Workplace and Credential Recognition.
- Racism on social media, within health care, and on public transit is overwhelming.
- Racism exists in workplaces, especially in entry-level jobs, and is reflected in promotions.

Key activities over this reporting period included:

### Cloudscape

Ongoing window displays of art in the form of comics tell stories of refugees moving to Canada, and promote community awareness and empathy. The *understanding through story project* has been ongoing since 2020. Originally displayed at transit stops, revolving displays of comics by artists posted in windows at 502 Columbia Street and the Welcome Centre have been a powerful medium to promote community understanding of why refugees flee to Canada.

### Community Dialogue

Sharing stories is a step towards understanding. Activities such as the Community Dialogues meant residents heard first hand experiences of racism and hate from a panel of Indigenous people. This opened the door to interesting, sometimes uncomfortable, discussions between community members and those with lived experience. After the Dialogue, food from local Indigenous bakers and caterers was shared – a universal way to break barriers and connect.

### Cultural Differences

The Belonging Working Group continued to collect light-hearted anecdotes about cultural differences. It grew from a member sharing the saying, “You can't spit on a smiling face!” Children in Korea are taught to smile, even when in trouble, as it is hard to stay angry with someone with a smile. A young student in New Westminster smiled, as taught, while being reprimanded by a teacher. The teacher misinterpreted her smile as a smirk.

The working group collects these stories to develop cultural awareness and understanding.

### Employment Forums

An Employment Working Group Forum for Newcomers in September 2023 supported skilled newcomers. There was information about training programs, résumé writing, library resources, and shared stories of successful pathways to employment. Newcomers connected with settlement and employment services, and there was cross-sector resource sharing.

In March 2024, the Working Group held an Employment Forum for Newcomer Youth – a population missing from the September event. This event was at capacity just a few days after posting the invitation. As well as resource tables and connections with service providers, there were presentations about first job interviews, writing resumes, and education programs.

### IIBPOC Support Group

IBPOC Support Group meetings continued at the community Welcome Centre in May and June 2023, and from November 2023 until the end of June 2024. The Community Navigator at the Welcome Centre facilitated the meetings. The LIP supported them.

Program participants shared experiences and supported each other in an environment where they can speak openly and authentically. Attendees came from Mexico, Columbia, Indonesia, Iran, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and India. Discussion revolved around the concerns they face as newcomers, and other discussions, such as definitions, e.g. *Canadian* does not mean White only, and *Native Canadian* does not mean White Canadian. Another discussion was about employment, and not having an English-sounding name. Some felt they have to anglicize their own name to succeed in securing employment.

### Indigenous anti-racism health tool kit – Planning 2023-24

A member of the New Westminster Spoke Committee from Spirit of the Children Society shared an overview of wrongs of the past, which are still ongoing, in the health care system. After discussion, the committee decided to create an anti-racism toolkit for health clinics.

Planning took place in the 2023-2024 fiscal year. The Fraser North West Division of Family Practice who oversee 55 health clinics in the area, partnered in the project. They shared the cost of printing, books, artwork, and boxes for the toolkits. Aimed at front line workers, then doctors, it will be distributed in 2024-25.



## Newcomer Day

The annual *New to New West Intercultural Festival and Information Fair* was celebrated in June 2023. This is a partnership between the LIP and the municipality, 100% funded by the City, and open to all newcomers. It was held outside at the Welcome Centre. Twenty-five organizations provided information about their services, including settlement, the municipality, social services, health, employment, financial services, transportation, education and more. There was Haida drumming, music and dance. About 150 attended, about half the number pre-COVID.

## Protocol Response to Hate Crimes

*How to respond to prejudice and hate: New Westminster guidelines for responding to hate crimes and critical incidents* is the community protocol shared throughout the community. Pages about using 911 and services to support victims or witness of hate have been translated into 14 languages. (Amharic, Arabic, Chinese (Traditional), Chinese (Simplified), English, Filipino, French, Korean, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Tigrigna and Ukrainian.)

## Research Project

The second stage of a research project took place this fiscal year. Previously, an Environmental Scan to identify unmet needs in services for newcomers was completed. This year, a consultant completed a Model Community-Based Plan that incorporates a local approach to service delivery. Workshops with newcomers and stakeholders helped increase awareness of services.

## Truth and Reconciliation Day

Spirit of the Children Society invited the Spoke Committee to hold a table on Truth and Reconciliation Day. The focus is always children. This year, treats and books from *Literacy Now* were given out to the children by youth from Purpose's Youth Hub.

# Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) Annual Report

April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024

## Program Description

The Peer Assisted Care Team (PACT) is a mobile, community-led team that offers support to individuals experiencing a mental health and/or substance use related crisis. PACT is an alternative response to police intervention, providing crisis support that focuses on prevention, health and well-being. The team, comprised of a Mental Health Worker and a Peer Support Worker (someone with lived or living experience), attends to crisis calls during scheduled service hours. This type of community initiative looks to respond to the needs of individuals most impacted by mental health and substance use, and provide trauma-informed, culturally safe support to youth and adults in the city of New Westminster.

The PACT program currently operates 7 days per week, from 7:00 am - 11:30 pm. The program is open to callers aged 13+ and adults in the City of New Westminster.

## Overview/Highlights of the Past Year

Our program went through a process of significant growth over the last fiscal year. The program officially launched in January 2023, and by the end of March 2023, we had 65 total calls. This fiscal year, the team received a total of 921 calls for service. The team worked hard to engage with members of the New West community to promote the program. We also began building relationships with other service providers and community organizations, as we often work collaboratively with both internal and external partners to support our clients experiencing crisis.

In October 2023, we expanded our hours of operation. At the time of program launch, PACT operated 7 days per week from 12:00pm until 8:00pm. With the program expansion, we were able to increase our hours of service, to 7:00am until 11:30pm. In order to support this increase we also doubled our staff team. The growth of our program was a significant development. Many of mental health and substance use services typically operate during regular business hours. Now that PACT support can be accessed early in the morning at late at night, we are able to fill a need and provide much needed support to clients in crisis when most of the typical services are unavailable.

## Personnel

The PACT Program currently has a permanent staff of 13 people, including:

- 1 Coordinator
- 6 Peer Support Workers
- 6 Mental Health Workers

## Staff Training

Over the fall, many of the staff completed training sessions to help build their skills and support further growth and professional development. The training was completed over the course of several weeks, and was facilitated by our program partners, the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) BC Branch. Staff from the North Shore PACT team were also in attendance, which gave our team an opportunity to connect with other folks in the community who are doing similar work.

Training topics included:

- Scene Safety & Situational Awareness
- Assessment & Documentation
- Mental Health & Substance Use 101
- Trauma-informed care; Peer-based approach
- Scenario Learning & Community Resources

In addition to the above, staff also completed a 2-day Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST) session to better learn how to support individuals who may be experiencing suicidal ideation.

## Outputs & Outcomes

From April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, the PACT Program received a **total of 921 calls** for service.

Referral Source		
Directly from Person In Crisis	Concerned family member/friend or community member	Third party, such as another social service agency or community based organization
515	103	303

The team spent **187 hours** providing support **over the phone**, and **474 hours** providing support **in-person**.

### Caller demographics

Age of Caller			
Under 19 years old	19-65 years old	Over 65 years old	Unknown
18	740	55	99

Gender				
Male	Female	Non-Binary	Other	Unknown
291	480	51	1	122

### Dispatch Locations

Dispatch Locations									
Downtown	Sapperton	Uptown	Queensborough	Brow of the Hill	Glenbrooke North	Kelvin	Glenbrooke South	Connaught Heights	Queen's Park
324	98	42	37	23	11	10	6	2	1

## **Reasons for assistance**

The main reasons for requesting PACT support were:

- Suicidal ideation – 46
- Self-harm – 2
- Substance use challenge – 85
- Loss of reality – 161
- Mental health – anxiety – 261
- Mental health – depression – 165
- Mental health – panic – 85
- Anger/aggression – 23
- Dispute – 13
- Other – 489

## **Vision for the Upcoming Year**

The PACT Program is in the midst of another program expansion. We are working on hiring more staff so that there can be two pairs of crisis responders per shift (currently, there is just one pair of responders per shift). This will allow the team to increase their capacity to address multiple calls for service. We also aim to expand and strengthen our relationships with other service providers and community organizations.