



2022

**ANNUAL
REPORT**



NOW
canada society

WHAT WE GOT UP TO THIS YEAR

PRESENTED BY LIZ TALBOTT, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

In last year's report we were delighted to announce that no one at NOW had tested positive for COVID. We sort of knew this wouldn't continue! Despite our amazing COVID cleaners' wonderful efforts, some staff, clients in our programming and tenants and their children tested positive throughout the year, however we really feel we got away with it lightly. With a lot of resourcefulness, creativity and luck we were able to keep all our programs up and running – a major success!

OUR NEW LOOK!!

We are proudly presenting our new branding this year! At the very end of last fiscal year, Brittani Stober attended "Design Day for Good" and worked with their awesome team to create a new look at NOW which was long overdue! We are loving the new logo and proudly display it on our business cards and brochures!



NOW DADS AND NOW PETS!

NOW has always been a female serving agency, however over the years we have increasingly been approached by low-income dads who needed affordable housing for their families. NOW has always recognized community need and amended its programming to better serve our region, therefore at the end of July 2022, we welcomed our first dad as a tenant at 1060 Cawston Ave in Kelowna. A very special day for the society! We also welcomed our first pets to the building -in the past we were a pet-free zone. The construction of this 40 unit apartment building was funded by BC Housing and CMHC, with BC Housing signing a 60 year Operating Agreement with the society to provide significant operational dollars. This year, 39 single females and moms, 5 dads, 26 children, 4 dogs and 9 cats have made 1060 Cawston Ave their home.

IT WAS A BUSY YEAR!

HALL CROSSING

Although this project came to fruition on April 1 – a day into the next fiscal year – this news is too exciting to keep under wraps for another 12 months!

On April 1, 2022 NOW was delighted to welcome 28 moms and 49 children to Hall Crossing. Hall Crossing is the vision of the Hall family who generously provided the land and fully funded the construction costs of 28 townhouses and a community centre for women and children who have fled or fleeing domestic violence and abuse. The concept was first conceived in 2015 and after seven years of planning it was donated to NOW Canada in April to operate for the community. Ed Hall commented: “Our goal, at the outset, was to try to create the finest, safest, most secure and enriching living environment in Canada for at risk moms and their kids. We hope we have achieved this and that many many families will be able to experience friendship, neighborliness and enrichment for many years to come.”

There is no doubt that this wonderful community will achieve and exceed all the above desires. NOW Canada would like to say a huge thank you to the incredible generosity from the Hall Family and to everyone who has helped turn this dream into reality.



TREE OF HOPE CAMPAIGN LIT UP OUR CHRISTMAS SEASON!!

NOW Canada, along with Karis Support Society was delighted to be joint recipients of the 2021 Tree of Hope campaign through the generosity of the Stober Foundation. This exciting campaign provided us with the opportunity to highlight the collaboration and partnership that NOW Canada and Karis Support Society have within our community while raising funds for our organizations.

The Stober Foundation agreed to match up to \$100,000 raised, however with community behind us, we blew through that amount and are extremely delighted to inform you that our community helped us raise just over \$200,000! Amazing!

What made that even more amazing is that the Stober Foundation then agreed to match the \$200,000 – dollar for dollar!

This is a wonderful example of community helping community: understanding that there are others, who are often our neighbours, who are struggling and at risk – and stepping up to help out. Thanks to the awesome folks at the Stober Foundation – such gratitude!

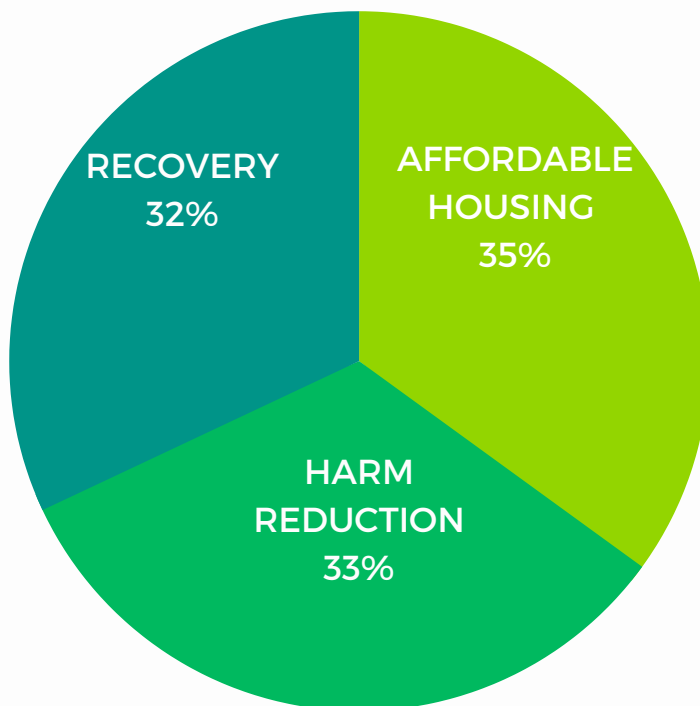


On behalf of NOW Canada – thank you to everyone who has kindly supported our society – we couldn't do this without you!

As we enter another year of service to our community, our goal is set on knocking down our emergency shelter and rebuilding it to include transitional housing for women. We are already in discussion with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and BC Housing – so keep your fingers crossed and watch this space! Hopefully, we will have more fabulous things to report to you all next year.

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

SPENDING BY CATEGORY



3.04M

TOTAL IMPACT

THIS YEAR WE INCREASED OUR IMPACT BY MORE THAN \$700,000 COMPARED TO LAST YEAR. THIS ALLOWED NOW CANADA TO HELP MORE WOMEN THAN EVER LIVE SAFELY AND WORK TOWARDS A LIFE FREE FROM EXPLOITATION, ABUSE AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE.

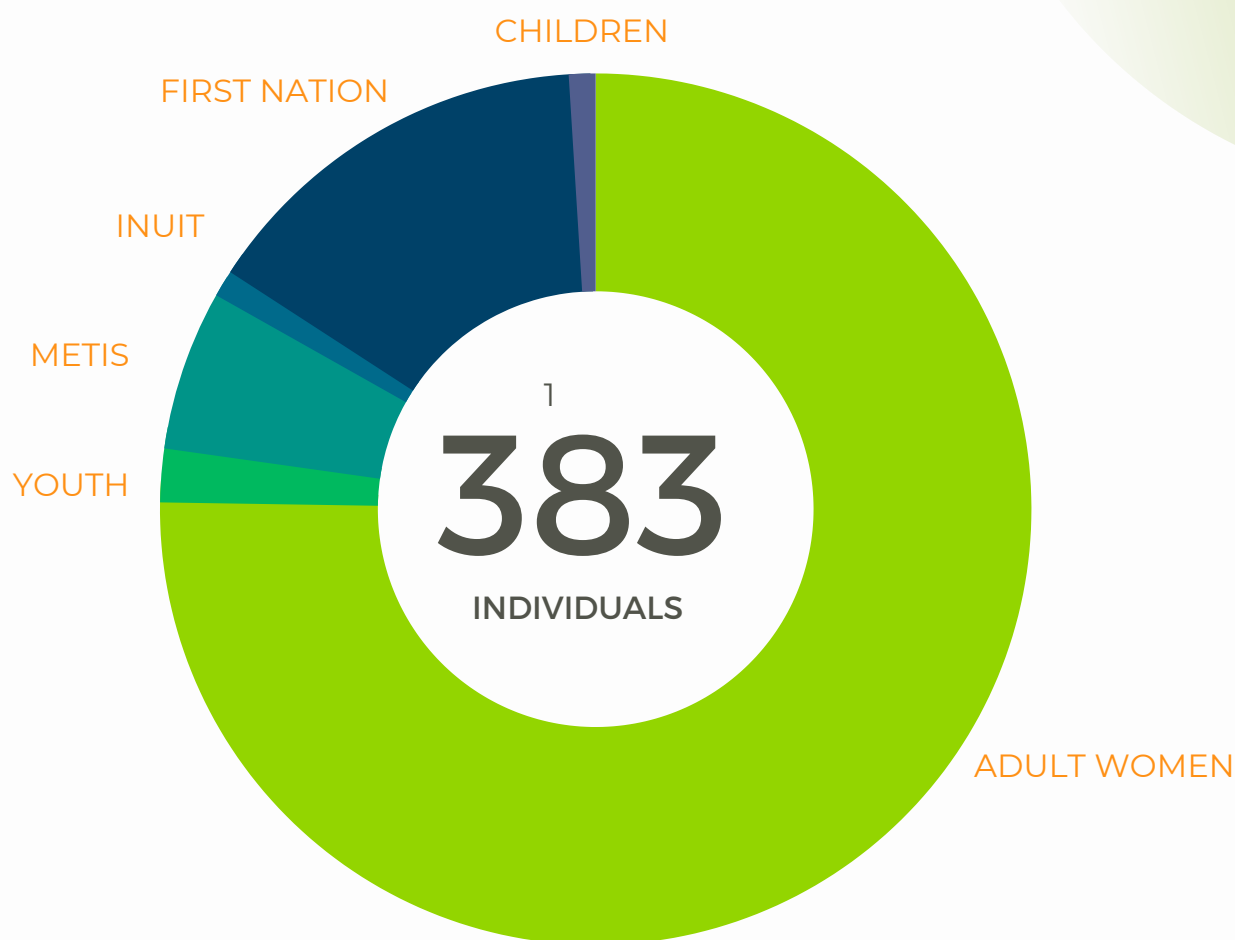
SHELTER SERVICES

PRESENTED BY JENN STRAUME, DIRECTOR OF SHELTER SERVICES

As mentioned at the beginning of this report, our shelter was built in the 1950s and is certainly at the end of its economic life. NOW has been working with NewTown Architecture and Bentsen Homes to create plans and budgets to redevelop the site to provide 20 shelter beds, with the addition of up to 24 transitional studios for women in our community.

The AG House is the only shelter in Kelowna working with this clientele, therefore the above goal is high on our priority list. We will continue working with CMHC and BC Housing to ensure the needs of females who are vulnerable and at-risk in our community are met.

CLIENTS SERVED



NOW Canada's Alexandra Gardner Women and Children Safe Centre (fondly known as AG House) is Kelowna's only low-barrier shelter specifically for women, female youth and children. Our goal is always to provide a safe, supportive space and accept women as they are. Many women who access our shelter are facing multiple barriers including, homelessness, substance use, and mental health challenges.



IMPACT OF COVID

With the COVID pandemic it was necessary to reduce our shelter capacity from 20 to 15 beds to allow for adequate social distancing. We were very fortunate in limiting covid outbreaks within the shelter. A large part of this was due to receiving funding for a COVID cleaner, and the purchase of a COVID testing machine. As well, we worked closely with our Health Authority to provide temporary isolation in local hotels for those that tested positive. In March of 2022 we had our first outbreak at the shelter which also had an impact on our staffing. The shelter staff were amazing and worked together as a team to make sure the shelter was staffed adequately, many working overtime hours and picking up additional shifts to help cover.



This year we served 383 unique individuals of those,105 identified as Indigenous. We served a total of 5,382 bed nights at the shelter which included 76 youth and 13 children.

With a current housing crisis in our community and an increasingly older client population accessing our shelter, our Case Worker Shelley Sullivan has had to develop creative solutions to find housing for our clients. She has been instrumental in helping many women who access our shelter secure housing and works collaboratively with a variety of community partners on the Coordinated Access Team.

Our focus at AG House and community has shifted towards shelter diversion. The purpose of diversion is designed to find safe appropriate alternatives to shelter once a person or family has become homeless. The intention is to avoid entering shelter if possible and sheltering individuals is used in situations when absolutely necessary. All staff have jumped on board and have been instrumental in finding appropriate alternatives for many women, so that entering our shelter is a last resort.

**LAST FISCAL YEAR,
NOW CANADA WAS
HAPPY TO PROVIDE
EMERGENCY
SHELTER TO**

383

INDIVIDUALS

**AG HOUSE
PROVIDED A TOTAL
OF**

5,382

BED NIGHTS

CREATING HOMES - CREATING COMMUNITY

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

NOW's affordable housing buildings create a sense of community in Kelowna. All buildings offer safe, secure and supportive accommodation for women, with and without children. In addition, 1060 Cawston Ave welcomes dads with children as tenants. The society also rents two microsuitses to women who are employed.

Rent is truly affordable as it is based on Income Assistance rates for some tenants (1 bed for \$375, 2 bed for \$570 and a three bed for \$660), and for those who are working, rent is based on 30% of tenants' income. Cawston Ave offers 30% of its apartments at just below market rent and Hall Crossing has a fixed rate for tenant rent.



**NOW
CANADA IS
CURRENTLY
HOUSING 135
ADULTS, 103
CHILDREN
AND A
VARIETY OF
DOGS AND
CATS!**

THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

THE ESSENTIALS PROGRAM

The Essentials Program was developed to provide an exit from a lifestyle of abuse, addiction and mental health concerns. This continuous intake program remains abstinence based. Supervised by Cindy Nichol, Director of Programs and Services, it has been carefully designed to provide individuals with the help they need to walk the challenging road to recovery.

Females wishing to leave a life of addiction and abuse need specialized services, therefore NOW offers a journey to healing through safe housing, four months of life skills programming and individualized case planning with support. These wrap-around services support individuals from the moment they enter the program until they are ready to transition to independence.

LAST FISCAL YEAR, THIS PROGRAM WAS ACCESSED BY 56 WOMEN AND FEMALE YOUTH.

77%

REMAINED ABSTINANT
WHILE IN THE PROGRAM

70%

LIVED IN NOW CANADA'S
SAFE HOUSING

90%

DEMONSTRATED A
POSITIVE CHANGE

27%

LIVED IN SAFE HOUSING
WITHIN THE COMMUNITY

79%

HAD AN AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE OF 90% OR
BETTER

3%

LIVED AT THE SHELTER
WHILE ACCESSING THE
PROGRAMMING

LIFE CHANGING PROGRAMS

THESE PROGRAMS COMPLEMENT NOW'S HOUSING INITIATIVES AND FORM A VITAL PART OF THE SOCIETY'S CONTINUUM OF CARE

MENTAL WELLNESS PROGRAM

Sam Scouse, NOW's Mental Wellness Worker has just completed her first year of offering this program to women and female youth at NOW Canada. NOW highlighted the need for this program many years ago, and funding from the Stober Foundation made this possible. As a result, 45 Essentials participants and an additional 22 women residing in NOW's affordable housing or staying at our homeless shelter received help to support their mental wellness.



EQUINE THERAPY

April – November each year, participants head up to Equine Connection Coaching Services in Vernon where they work with horses. This program focuses on building self-esteem, encouraging team-working and the skills needed to maintain a healthy lifestyle.



HOLISTIC THERAPY AND PILATES

Weekly group sessions help participants' physical and mental stability, ensuring they stay safe, free from violence and abuse and remain focused on their recovery.

PEER MENTOR PROGRAM

NOW's Peer Mentors are an extraordinary group of ladies who have successfully completed the Essentials Program.

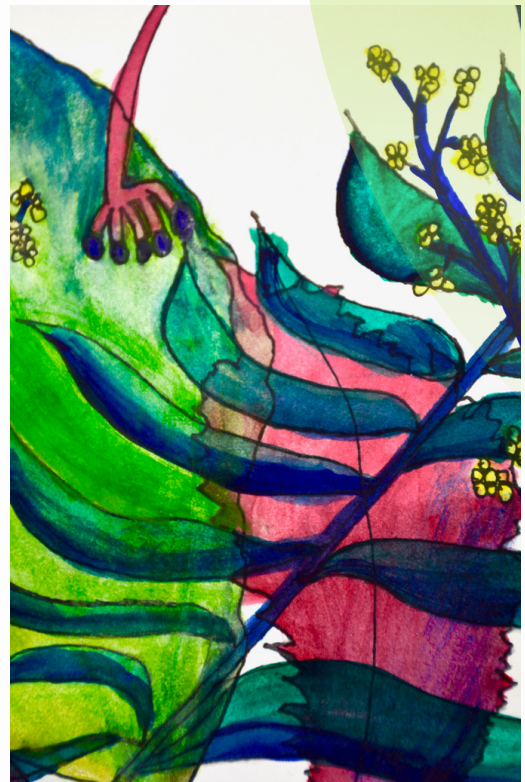
They want to 'give back' and demonstrate that with hard work, determination and a good support system in place, a life can be turned around. They are great role models and can connect with those in the program who may be struggling and finding it hard to remain committed to their recovery.



EXPRESSIVE ARTS

In a nutshell, The Expressive Arts program offers an avenue that encourages the process of creating. Science teaches us that the process of creating improves brain health. It also enhances self-expression, fine motor skill development, relaxation, the development of self, and an opportunity to play. It is a platform to give honour to grief and pain, but more importantly it invites a journey to wholeness.

With art as an avenue, participants are offered a relaxing, safe, inclusive space, to give voice to their personal stories and dreams through specific creative prompts and projects.



TRAUMA THERAPY

The trauma participants have experienced runs deep, therefore many Essentials participants and those living in our affordable housing choose individual trauma therapy to help them through life's challenges.



HOMELESS PREVENTION

The Homeless Prevention Program made significant strides in helping low-income individuals find housing or maintain their current housing status through offering time-limited rental supplements or assistance with expenses such as utility costs, damage deposits and/or moving and storage expenses.

Facilitated by Sandra Peters, Housing Support Coordinator, this year 117 participants accessed the program and received the help needed to remain housed.

FOLLOW CARE

A client-initiated program which is offered to graduates of the Essentials Program to help them become fully independent.

HEALTHY LIVING PROGRAM

An extension of the Follow Care Program, this is financial assistance for participants who have emergent needs and are struggling to make ends meet.



IT TAKES A TEAM - AND WE'VE GOT THE BEST!

GENEROUS FUNDERS

It would be impossible to provide our programs and services without committed funding partners. NOW is proud to work with federal, provincial and municipal government, as well as a variety of foundations, service clubs, schools, corporate and private donors throughout the province to ensure adequate funding is in place.

All donations are gratefully received and spent in a cost-effective way so as many people as possible are benefiting from the kindness of those who direct their hard-earned dollars NOW Canada's way.

NOW's Financial Administrator, Nicole Brown ensures the financial accountability and transparency for the agency, develops budgets and formulates reports as needed by our funders and the Board.

We would like to thank all our funding partners for recognizing the need for our services and for continuing to support NOW Canada. Due to their outstanding generosity, we can turn a person's hope into reality.

VOLUNTEERS - OUR HEROES!

NOW needs to recognize the volunteerism offered to our society – a truly amazing gesture of caring from members of our community. Volunteers continue to play an important part in the society's continuum of care.

We would like to say a special 'thank you' to Janice Kornell, Marilynne and Robert Fine, Peter Boyd and Wendy Delcourt and her Expressive Arts team. However, we are fortunate to be the recipients of numerous acts of volunteerism —so many businesses, churches, schools and individuals have supported us this year, too many to mention, so we would like to say an 'all inclusive' THANK YOU for being so awesome – for being generous with your time, energy and compassion. We appreciate you all!

LEADING THE WAY – NOW'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NOW's Board of Directors provides leadership and governance to the society. They invest their time to develop a strategic path for NOW, review By-Laws, policy and procedures and spread the word of the work we do at NOW within the community.

Importantly this year, they concentrated on developing a Truth and Reconciliation Policy which the society will commit to using as a guiding principle in all aspects of our governance and work at NOW. After many years of service on the Board, and more recently as Board President, Alida Privett is stepping down and passing the torch over to Dennis Jasper.

Alida led the Board with respect and compassion, always focusing on the big picture of governance, while having the best interests of the clients we serve forefront in her mind. She supported staff – continuously offering encouragement and valuable advice.



**THE NOW
TEAM IS
EXTREMELY
GRATEFUL
FOR ALL THE
HOURS SHE
DEDICATED
TO ENSURING
NOW
OPERATES AT
ITS BEST.**

AWESOME STAFF

It takes a special kind of person to work at NOW Canada. A mix of credentials, expertise and knowledge, together with commitment, dedication and compassion gives you an idea of the people we are so very fortunate to employ. Whether individuals have been employed for many years or are new to our team, everyone is client focused – with a goal of providing quality programs and services for those who walk through our doors.

No matter what role staff fulfil, everyone is important and when we combine everything everyone brings to the table, we create an exceptional society which offers opportunity and saves lives.

Thank you, this year to Serena Charleton, Building Manager, who was the primary 'go to' person in the renting-up and settling in of tenants (and pets!) in 40 apartments and 28 townhouses – a challenging task by anyone's standards! Also, thanks to Shelley Sullivan who has been a key support at the AG House this year while the society dealt with COVID, staffing challenges and much more!

As always, a special thank you to Cindy Nichol and Jenn Straume who sit on the Management Team. These ladies can rise to any challenge – take it on and deal with it! They provide a solid foundation of expertise which supports staff and provides NOW Canada participants with the hope and assurance they need.



A FINAL WORD FROM ALIDA PRIVETT, PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS



It has been my pleasure to serve as the chair of the NOW Canada Board of Directors and president of this society, following in the wise footsteps of our past president, Dawn Wrightson. I have learned more than I could have asked or imagined, and continue to stand in awe of the work Liz Talbott and her team have accomplished over this past year.

NOW has reached a new place in our wider community's awareness. The Tree of Hope, the gifting of Hall Crossing, the increased diversity of our services and clientele, the number of invitations to enter into partnerships and major projects, the prospect of redeveloping the site and scope of our shelter services... the list goes on. The size and complexity of our organization are increasing. Solid leadership is required and in place at all levels to support this growth and to adapt to the changing needs in our community.

Your Board of Directors works to guide and ensure compliance with existing policy, mandates and bylaws across the organization. We have met our strategic priorities for this year including developing and implementing an ED Annual Review document and process, developing and affirming a Truth and Reconciliation Policy, based on the Calls to Action, and a complete review/update of our governance policies.

We thank members of the society for your commitment to this wonderful organization, for all that you do behind the scenes, and our partners in this work for their faith in NOW as we continue to learn together how best to serve our clients into the future.