

# OUR RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

As Covid-19 hit the world, businesses and organizations everywhere were required to shut down and isolate, but we had the privilege of expanding and responding in a way that would care for the most vulnerable in the Whalley area.

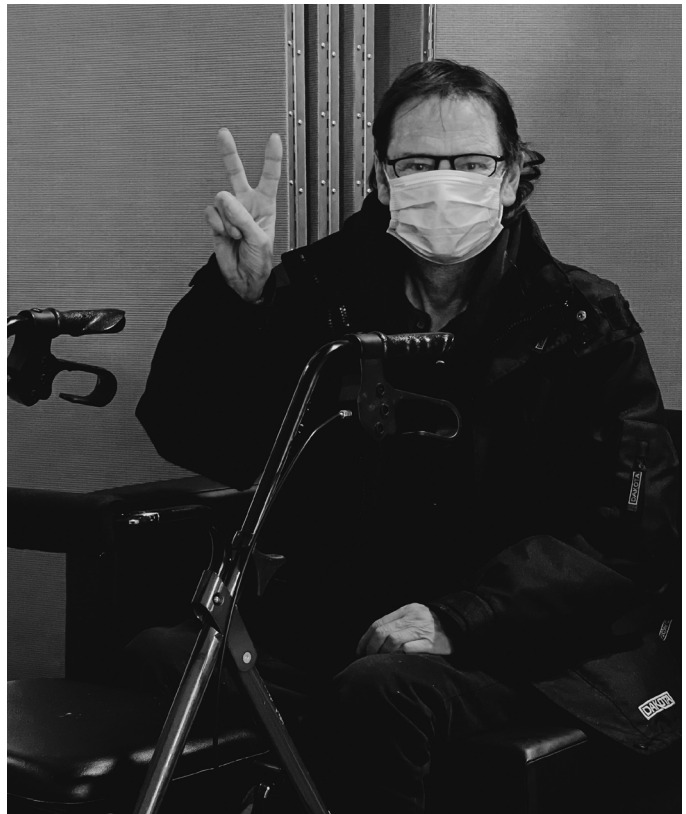
Our staff team has shown bravery and excellence at the challenge of caring for people in this uncertain time, as we built a plane while it was in flight. In the first few weeks of the pandemic it was a challenge to adapt and know whether we would be able to secure much-needed food and supplies to continue to feed and house those in our community.

With the help of churches and local organizations our donations began to arrive, volunteers began to assemble meals off-site, our kitchen was moved to a local school and our food program was moved from our previous community dining room experience to now serve meals through the front window.

In the past year we have partnered with BC Housing and the City of Surrey to open three shelters to accommodate the growing need in Whalley. At the beginning of the pandemic, we established an Emergency Response Center, a joint partnership with BC Housing, the City of Surrey, and Fraser Health, to care for those who were homeless and waiting on test results, or were in need of isolation while they were ill.

This team of nurses was a much-needed addition to our staff team as they specialized in mental health care, could help monitor guests who were in need of medical attention, and also prescribe OAT therapy and administer a Managed Alcohol Program. This partnership has been an asset to our guests.

This program has been relocated to our newest shelter, the Olive Branch, and the care for the guests who were once at the Emergency Response Center is now available ongoing to those who desperately need it. The Emergency Response Center continues



*Alan, a resident at the new Olive Branch shelter that opened Nov 16 in response to increased need for shelter space in Surrey during the COVID-19 pandemic.*

to run by referral from SUMS Place Temporary Shelter and we continue to adapt as needed.

Now, more than ever, it has been critical for us to continue to offer high level care within a community of dignity and respect in order to care for our guests' basic needs and encourage them to move forward in society in an uncertain time. We are constantly navigating the lines between life and death as we do our utmost to keep our facilities safe from both the Covid-19 pandemic and the overdose crisis. It has been an incredibly difficult year for so many and we are thankful for the opportunity to respond.





*The North Surrey Recreation Centre transformed into Surrey's COVID-19 Emergency Response Centre in early April.*

Our Emergency Management Team continues to take action in keeping both our guests and staff as safe as possible while ensuring protocols from Fraser Health, BCCDC, Worksafe BC and the Provincial Health Authority and properly enforced in order to minimize any risk of transmission. Here are some of the steps we've taken:

- SUMS Place Temporary shelter has been limited to 30 beds from 50 in order to accommodate a 2m distance between guests at all times
- The Cove Temporary shelter has been limited to 25 beds from 46 in order to accommodate for physical distance among guests
- Upon entry all staff and guests are screened for body temperatures over 37.8C, and must pass the COVID-19 Screening Checklist from <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>
- Staff are also to review the checklist before entering the shelter and inform the site Coordinator that they are unable to work if they exhibit any symptoms
- Guests exhibiting symptoms are quarantined on site until further instruction from Fraser Health
- Food is prepared off-site and served inside only to guests staying at the shelter. Guests who are living outside or in poverty in the neighbourhood are served breakfast, lunch and dinner through the front window at SUMS Place.
- Sanitation protocols have been improved to include disinfecting and sanitizing all frequently used surfaces every few hours
- Signage is posted to educate staff and guests reminding them to not enter the building if they have any signs, symptoms or risk factors of Covid-19
- When possible all meetings will be held virtually. If this is not an option all meeting participants must remain 2m apart. If 2m distancing is not possible then a barrier must be in place.
- All workstations have been adjusted to provide 2m of physical distancing between staff members
- Visitors will only be admitted into each facility with an appointment
- Educated our guests on how to properly wear masks, keep their distance, and sanitize regularly
- As communication from the Province changes our protocols will continue to adapt as needed.

#### **What you Can Do:**

- Pray for safety and health for our guests
- Continue to support through donating warm clothing, socks and underwear
- Donate to help with food and needs throughout the society

