



ANNUAL REPORT

Highlights of our 2021-22 Year

Who We Are

Connective is a social services nonprofit operating in BC and the Yukon to create safe, healthy, and inclusive communities for all. We do this through a continuum of innovative and dynamic housing, life-skills, outreach, employment, and community-based services, with the goal of assisting individuals to achieve greater independence.

The Connective approach is person-centered, holistic, and inclusive. We are here for everyone – at every stage, in any circumstance – including those experiencing poverty, homelessness, mental health challenges, problematic substance use, those with developmental disabilities, those impacted by the criminal justice system, and those experiencing other complex barriers.

Every day, we see the resilience of people rewriting their own narrative and working against a system that is deeply flawed. Our work on the ground is a foundation to affect lasting social change.

OUR VISION

A safe, healthy, and inclusive community for all

OUR MISSION

We strengthen communities by supporting people experiencing barriers so they can achieve greater independence

OUR CORE VALUES

Inclusive – We create an environment where everyone can feel welcome and respected

Accountable – We are responsive, take responsibility for our actions, and honour our commitments

Person-Centered – We adapt our approach to the individual and use empathy and compassion in all of our interactions

Collaborative – We engage and work closely with others, both within and outside our organization

Determined – We are passionate, do not shy away from tough challenges, and respond to setbacks with a renewed drive to succeed

Land Acknowledgement

We provide support to people and communities on the ancestral, traditional, and unceded Indigenous territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓ əm (Musqueam), skwx̌ wú7mesh (Squamish), sel̓ íl̓ witulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Kway-quit-lum (Kwkwetlem), Kwantlen, Q'e'ycey (Katzie), Matsqui, Sema:th (Sumas), , səmi'a:mu: (Semiahmoo), Qayqayt, Stó:lō, scəwaθn məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen), and other Coast Salish Peoples, on traditional Dakelh territory, home of the Lheidli T'enneh Nation, of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc within Secwépemc'ulucw, the traditional territory of the Secwépemc people, as well as the traditional lands of the Kwanlin Dūn First Nation, Ta'an Kwäch'än Council, and other Yukon First Nations.

We are honoured to work as visitors on Indigenous land, and do not take lightly the privilege and responsibility of providing culturally appropriate services. To uphold our commitment to providing culturally informed and appropriate services, we work to integrate the wisdom, expertise, and knowledge of Elders, Indigenous Leadership, Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous service users, and Indigenous-led community groups in all that we do.

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Our Year in Numbers



4,204

Persons Served



33

Programs Supporting
Our Communities



310

Housing Units



40%

Persons Served Identified
as Indigenous



358

Staff Working
Toward Our Vision



237

Jobs Secured through
our ACES Program



82%, 17%, 1%

Men, Women, Non-Binary
Gender Identities Served



1,867

Hours Contributed
by Volunteers



\$487,202

Rental & Material
Subsidies Distributed

Serving More People in More Places

Our Locations

- Vancouver
- South Fraser
- North Fraser
- Kamloops
- Prince George
- Whitehorse

We were excited to welcome Kamloops to the Connective team in March of 2022. Please see our Kamloops Annual Report for more information on their programs and updates from the past year.



Programs

- Abbotsford Community Service Office
- ACES
- Charland Residential
- Community Case Management and Supervision
- Community Living Outreach
- Community Support Initiatives
- Dogwood
- East 3rd Residential
- Elliott House
- Forensic Outreach
- Fraser Apartments
- Frey Place
- Guy Richmond Place
- Hawthorn
- Hobden House
- Home Share
- Homelessness Prevention Program
- Housing First Residence
- Kingsway Supportive Housing*
- Miller Block
- Miyáq'elhá:wetawt
- North Fraser Reintegration
- North Surrey Supportive Housing*
- Ontario St. Supportive Housing
- Reaching Home
- Sage House*
- Samara Community House
- SHARP
- Teak House*
- Tim's Manor
- Vancouver Apartments
- Vancouver CSO
- Whitehorse Residential Support

*Coming Soon

A Message from Our Board Chair



PAT ALEXANDER
BOARD CHAIR

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Pat Alexander', written over a light blue horizontal line.

It has been such a pleasure to spend another year with Connective's Board of Directors, and to see firsthand the dedication, perseverance, and resilience of the people involved at all levels of this organization – from those who access our services and programs, to the frontline staff who make them available, and the administrative teams who maintain the systems and processes that feed into them.

Throughout 2021-22 I've witnessed the countless ways this team has continued to evolve, adapt, and challenge one another (and us on the Board) to do more and reach further, and I have been profoundly grateful for the chance to play a part in this journey, as Board Chair.

In this position I'm lucky to work and interact with a host of inspiring individuals. I want to recognize and extend my sincere appreciation and thanks to the two board members who retired in this last year, Liam Menard and Ghalib Bhayani, while also sharing my excitement and enthusiasm for the contributions of those new members who've stepped forward in their place, Mavis Boucher, Brent Mulhall, and Don Rodgers. Their perspectives and expertise have allowed us to stand deeper in concert with those we serve.

By continuing to embrace technology and all that it allows for, we've created new opportunities for interaction, learning, and development, and remained an active

and engaged Board despite the ongoing challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. We've been tremendously appreciative of the efforts Connective staff have made to deepen their engagement with us, in turn. Whether in leading presentations or committees with our Board members, their active participation has gone a long way toward bringing us all together, even as we remained socially distant.

It has been energizing to see the team continue to grow and set the stage for Connective's next chapter. In seeking to play our part in this path forward, the Board has supported the streamlining and modernization of key infrastructure systems and processes, so that as we reach further in support of our communities, we retain the person-centered, community-based approach we're known for.

Between the growth of our teams, the alignment of our name and identity as we became Connective, and the relationships we've strengthened with organizations and partners across BC and Yukon, we're well situated to hit the ground running in this next year.

I am incredibly proud of the achievements highlighted in this report. While just a few of the many possible stories from the last year, it offers a window into the world I'm lucky enough to engage with each and every day – I hope you enjoy it.

A Message from Our CEO



MARK MILLER
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Mark Miller', written over a light blue horizontal line.

As I sit down to think on this past year and all that it has held, I find myself at a loss for where to begin. This difficulty speaks to just how many exciting moving pieces were in play across these last 365 days, and how I'm continually inspired by the resilience and determination of our service users, our staff teams, and our communities.

For as much as this last year has continued to challenge, more than anything, it has demonstrated our incredible resolve. Our cautious, measured approach to the pandemic allowed us to minimize its impacts on our programs, and our proactive harm-reduction strategies aided those we serve in navigating the ongoing opioid crisis.

We applied that same careful attention in guiding our transformation to Connective last fall, a conscious step to ensure that our name and identity accurately reflected who we had become, and the diverse populations and needs we had grown to serve. As we've continued to expand that definition of who and how we support, we've been able to fill service gaps and connect communities to a larger network of care.

This has only been possible through the work of our diverse and dedicated staff teams, who now and in the past have contributed to the solid foundation on which our future as an organization stands. I've been so pleased this past year to see the continued development of these teams, with several long-serving staff

moving into leadership roles and operationalizing their extensive knowledge and passion in exciting new ways.

As our people and programs continue to reach further in support of our service users, it is crucial that our infrastructure grow alongside them to meet our evolving logistical, strategic, and administrative needs. The investments we've made this year across finance, IT, and beyond, will allow us to build modern and robust systems that can provide for our health and resilience long into the future.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't also speak to the valuable collaborations and partnerships that play such an important role in our ability to provide person-centered services. From our growing relationships with health authorities, to our partnership with the Council of Yukon First Nations, these and a host of other examples from this past year have reminded us time and again that together, we are more.

I'm so honored to be a part of this organization and I can't wait to see where this next year takes us. I want to extend a sincere thank you to our service users, volunteers, staff, partners, donors, funders, and dedicated Board of Directors for all that you do in bringing our vision to life. Together, we can create safe, healthy, and inclusive communities for all.

Together, we are Connective.

A Year of Challenges & Responses

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In the second year of the COVID-19 pandemic, its obstacles, while more familiar, were no less challenging. The resilience of our communities and service users inspired us all, as we united in support of one another. Our staff and partners continued to exercise creativity and determination in aiding our service users to navigate the pandemic, and its impacts on poverty, mental health, addiction, and other complex social issues.

From our Vancouver Apartments team translating all pandemic communications into their resident's families' preferred language, to our Kensington House program turning an unused basement suite into a COVID-19 isolation area, the year brought countless examples of staff teams thinking on their feet and acting with compassion to meet new challenges.

OPIOD CRISIS

Alongside COVID-19, the overdose crisis continued to hit hard in our communities. 2021 saw a staggering number of overdose deaths, with BC recording a 26% increase over 2020 and its highest annual number to date. This spike was also reflected in the Yukon, where new peaks caused the government to declare a substance use health emergency. These losses of life are devastating, far too many, and most importantly, preventable.

Our programs continued to support service users in as many ways as possible. Residential programs across the organization increased their house checks from three to four per shift, 26 more Brave Motion Sensors were installed across our Community Residential Facilities (to aid staff in responding to potential overdoses), and 137 staff were trained on the use of Naloxone (a fast-acting drug used to temporarily reverse the effects of opioid overdoses).

STAFFING CHALLENGES

As COVID-19 illness and isolation requirements caused sudden and dramatic changes to employee availability, the pandemic also stretched and stressed the job market in all new ways. Job vacancies in Canada reached their highest point in the second quarter of 2021, and in BC, vacancy numbers were even higher.

In response to these growing job market challenges, and to meet the needs of our new and expanding programs, our People and Culture Team formed a recruitment strategy committee, established a comprehensive staff retention plan, and implemented an Applicant Tracking System to streamline the application and hiring process for candidates. We invested heavily in our teams to build a strong foundation for future stability and growth.

200% Increase to our recruitment capacity

\$35,000 Invested in our referral program

\$20,000 Invested in external recruitment marketing

CLIMATE CHANGE

With each passing year we see more and more examples of the extreme, unpredictable, and deadly consequences of our rapidly changing climate. In much the same way that the COVID-19 and opioid pandemics hit hardest among those already most vulnerable, extreme weather events have the most direct and adverse impacts on those experiencing homelessness, living in unstable housing, or otherwise dealing with complex barriers.

This past year we saw three devastating examples of how the climate emergency is increasingly impacting our communities, as the 'heat dome' gripped the Lower Mainland in record breaking 40°+ temperatures, a devastating fire season tore through entire communities and draped parts of BC and Yukon in heavy smoke, and historic flooding submerged parts of the Fraser Valley in late 2021.



COMMUNITY LIVING SERVICES OUTREACH RESPONDS TO THE HEAT DOME

"Immediately it was all hands on deck. We were learning, what does heat stroke look like? How can we identify it in the folks we're supporting?" — Freya Deedes-Vincke, Program Manager

When the heat dome blanketed the Lower Mainland in June 2021, the extreme heat had life-threatening impacts on the elderly and immunocompromised, especially those without access to adequate shelter or cooling.

Freya and the CLS team, working together with other Connective Program Managers Katie, and Rebecca, jumped into action and secured funding from United Way for emergency relief – everything from flats of Gatorade and water to sunscreen, hats, flip flops, and fans. The delivery of these supplies was like a medical triage:

"It was a process of thinking, okay, we know this person lives in a cooled high rise, he's comfortable, so we're going to go here instead; he doesn't have AC. Or, we know where so and so puts their tent, so we're going to go over there and skip over this person, who lives with their family and is being cared for."

The Heat Dome claimed nearly 600 lives across the Lower Mainland in the span of just a few short weeks. For Freya and the team, it was a wakeup call.

"We knew that climate change was doing funny things to our environment, but this was the first time that it felt truly dangerous. The heat dome just drove home how we're going to have to adapt accordingly to these new challenges."



Uniting Our Community: Vancouver CSO's Orange Shirt Day Event

In May 2013, inspired by the accounts of Phyllis Jack Westbad, the orange shirt was presented as a symbol of Indigenous people's suffering caused by the residential school system. September 30th became Orange Shirt Day, a grassroots, Indigenous-led day that honours the children who survived residential schools and remembers those who did not.

In seeking to honour this important day of reflection and remembrance, bring people together during an otherwise isolating pandemic, and foster a community of care and healing around this challenging time for our Indigenous service users, Connective's Vancouver Community Services Office (VCSO) held an Orange Shirt Day event.

Made possible by a grant from the City of Vancouver, the day saw nearly 100 orange shirts given out, with the option to personalize them using fabric paint and markers. The event captured the attention of passersby, with many stopping to talk, learn, and receive a shirt. \$265 in donations were also collected, and given to the Indian Residential School Survivor's Society.

The Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society was contracted to provide catering for the day, and Bannock and fresh fruit was served to those in attendance. The grant also supported two Indigenous service users to contribute to event programming. Teteulsh#2 opened the day with drumming and singing, and throughout the day shared his experiences with the justice system. Another service user held beaded key chain making workshops, drawing a consistent crowd.

"It felt really important to staff to be able to participate in the day and learn from our service users that were in attendance, and to take part in something together that's outside our usual direct service delivery."

— Lisa Wagner, Community Services Manager



Our ACES Program Reaches Further

Acquiring Community Based Employment Skills (ACES) supports individuals facing multiple barriers to employment by providing training, employability skills, and job search assistance. Thanks to additional funding from the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training over the past year, the program worked with more people than ever before.

622 People Served
\$10,000 Material Supports Distributed
778 Trainings Completed

While expanding their reach, our ACES teams worked hard to cater to the diverse needs and goals of participants by also expanding the types of training on offer.

“We’re at the point where we can get people through construction training no problem,” says Lisa Wagner, Community Services Manager. “But not everyone wants to, or can do, construction. Even in positions like traffic control, which is less about hands-on, hard labour, you’re still on your feet for 8 hours and not everyone is able to do that kind of physical work.”

With the help and initiative of some new team members, ACES found some alternatives. Two

extremely popular new options are the Lash Extension and Nail Technician courses, done in partnership with XAF Beauty.

“These beauty cohorts, they’ve been not just youth and not just women, but that is where they’re most popular. Which is great, because it allows us to expand our expertise and focus.”

The team is about to run its first security cohort, and has been exploring options like barber training, as well.



EMPLOYMENT EDUCATION & TRAINING IN REMOTE COMMUNITIES

In the spring of 2022, Connective was honoured to be invited to Takla Lake First Nation.

There, some 5.5 hours and 350KM north of Prince George, the ACES team delivered employment training courses and certifications, including Standard First Aid CPR/AED, WHIMIS, and wildfire training, over 4 days.

24 individuals signed up to take part initially, but as excitement and positive word of mouth spread on day 1, others showed up on

subsequent days to see how they could learn and get involved.

The Chief and his family worked closely with our team to bring the ACES program to the Takla Lake community, and to weave cultural elements into the training, including:

- Starting each day with a smudging ceremony
- Incorporating Indigenous medicines into the First Aid Training
- Taking time to share cultural music through drumming and flute

Delivering these training cohorts in Takla Lake was an incredible experience for the team, and an important asset to the community.

Offering training locally meant reaching many more individuals, especially youth, who either don’t have the means to access opportunities typically concentrated elsewhere, or who choose to remain close to family and community. The training also led to many participants securing jobs close to home, benefiting them individually, contributing to the local economy, and building local capacity.

Since Takla Lake, the team has also delivered training in Lake Babine, and Stellat’en. Looking ahead, there are plans to work with other First Nations communities in Northern BC, providing more employment training to more people, in more places.





“JUST ONE PHONE CALL”: THE IMPACT OF PERSON-CENTERED, WRAP-AROUND SUPPORTS

Though ACES is, first and foremost, an employment program, the team recognizes the importance of taking an individual's unique needs and goals into account.

“We have to change our approach with everybody we work with,” says Mandy Foord, former ACES Coordinator (and current CCMS Program Manager). “For some, it takes two days to do everything and get a job, and for others, it can take two months to get a resume going...that's the thing with wraparound supports – we recognize that other areas may need to be built up before focusing on employment.”

JIMMY'S STORY

Jimmy first contacted Connective and our ACES team on the recommendation of his probation officer.

Throughout his life, Jimmy had owned several businesses, had a family, and never had issues with the law or with substance use. It was only when an accident led to a misuse of prescription pain medicine, that things snowballed. Jimmy lost his businesses, his family, ended up living on the street, and eventually, he was placed on house arrest.

This journey was filled with challenges, but as Jimmy is quick to say, with “just one phone call” to ACES, he was able to turn things back around. “I went online, and looked it up, and found it agreeable to what I needed at the time. I started the construction course in November, around the same time that I called. It was very informative. I learned to operate and became well acquainted with many different types of construction equipment, and took WHMIS, fall protection,

and hazard chemical courses as well...I received all 14 certificates, and I'm quite proud of them.”

Mandy recalls how Jimmy “showed up every day, stayed overtime, and was just very, very interested in practicing on the machines as much as he could.” Because Jimmy was unfamiliar with using computers to apply for jobs, he worked closely with Mandy on this after the course. Together, they found him a job with an extremely inclusive company.

“It turned out to be very successful for me, because it led to me getting a job although I have a criminal record. More than financial, it's the physical and mental aspect of working that's keeping me active, healthy, and feeling younger every day...and clear headed, and drug free.”

SHARP Expands Its Services

This past year, our SHARP program team was excited to start accepting federal parole clients.

Getting a federal parole program to coincide under the same roof as an existing provincial and territorial bail and probation program was not without its challenges. Because parole clients are serving a sentence in the community, there are clearly defined requirements and limitations placed on them.

Those on bail, however, are still awaiting a trial to determine whether they've been found guilty, and so can face a very different set of expectations.

For Claire Mercer, SHARP's Assistant Program Manager, the key was in getting residents to understand that “even though everyone is living in the same space, there are two different programs, and everyone is on their own track.”

Everyone deserves the chance to live safely in their community of choice, and this development at SHARP now means that

individuals serving Federal sentences and released on parole have this opportunity in the Yukon.

“We try to get guys who live out here and are from here. Because we just want them to be able to integrate back into their community, safely and with support.”

SHARP's first Federal client came in October of 2021. He was very nervous for his transition back to Whitehorse, but slowly built his confidence, connected with staff, and was open about the areas where he needed help.

Within the first couple months, he obtained a full-time job doing construction. In time, he moved out of the program and has been doing very well since. He has and continues to work hard to overcome his institutionalization and credits his transition to the support he received from SHARP and his parole officer.



Miyáq'elhá:wetawt's Alumni Program

With each day bringing unexpected challenges, our focus as direct service providers is so often on the here and now. But what comes after? How do we continue honoring our duty of care once those we serve have moved on?

This past year, staff at Miyáq'elhá:wetawt asked themselves that question, and in answering it, reframed what it means to 'complete' a program.

When individuals transfer to Miyáq'elhá:wetawt, there's continuity between the Indigenous services and programs available in prison, and what they can access here.

Upon leaving the program, however, "There's a gap between the resources that have been available to them, and their ability to find them for themselves in the community. Not all the guys can."

"The byproduct of doing time in a prison is, you're told every day when to get up, when to eat, where to go. You don't have to seek anything yourself."

— Adam Strider, Program Manager



Without attachment to ongoing support and to the Indigenous cultural pieces that, for many, played such an important part in their successful transition to independence, there is a risk that things could fall apart.

In responding to this, Adam and his team have established an unofficial Alumni Program. There's no obligation on residents to come back, but there is an open-door policy. What Adam and his team are finding, is that door keeps being opened. Alumni have come back to check in, to share work opportunities, to connect with Elders, to take part in Indigenous group activities, and to lead informal classes for current residents.

"The guys that have finished the program, they have almost a sense of obligation to keep doing



the things that keep them connected to their wellbeing, but then also they're motivating the new guys to honestly embrace those cultural elements that can make such a big difference."

For Adam, this approach has become a big part of honouring our commitment to residents.

"If we can give them the space to say when they need something, if we can give them something dependable, then we can help keep them safe, and in turn help keep the community safe."

Vancouver Apartments Reassesses Harm Reduction

Vancouver Apartments is our longest running community living residential program, operating 24/7 since 2001 to provide a safe and supportive home to four individuals living with developmental disabilities. The program has also, historically, been abstinence-based.

That changed in late August of 2021, when the Vancouver Apartments team learned that a resident had suffered an overdose while out in the community. Thankfully, they were resuscitated, and brought to a hospital for observation.

With the realities of the ongoing overdose crisis hitting so close to home, it was a stark indicator that, "This isn't working. This is too rigid." For Raven Drumheller, former Vancouver Apartments Program Manager (and current Manager of Supportive Housing), the resulting

conversations made clearer than ever the "need and the value in just letting folks know that who they are is okay, and we want to support them with where they are right now, not only where they could be."

While staff had always been equipped with and trained in the use of Naloxone, now, amendments have been made to the Resident Handbook to allow substance use outside of the residence. This shift in language and approach has allowed staff to meet residents' needs, while leaning on their strong rapport to also engage in open, honest, and supportive drug education conversations.

Reflecting on this shift, Raven speaks to the importance of flexibility and a willingness to change;

"I think that if we didn't evolve and we didn't learn and we didn't unlearn, so to speak, we would be in a very, very trying place...Because changes like these are how we save lives...how we continue to move in the right direction."

Looking ahead, the team is interested in developing fentanyl testing strip protocols. They recognize that even with this recent change, there is always room to grow; there is always room to ask the question, "How can we do better by the people we support?"



Becoming Connective

In the fall of 2021, we took an exciting step forward. We became Connective.

While we will always honor our history and roots, we have been thrilled to operate this first half year under a name that authentically shares our story.

Connective embodies all that we are as an organization – whether it's connecting vulnerable community members to the resources and services they need to meet their self-determined goals, connecting leaders across the social and criminal justice sector to break down silos and make informed decisions, or connecting with the people experiencing barriers so that they are seen, heard, and valued as contributing members of our community: We are Connective.

ABOUT OUR LOGO

We love our new look. The shapes that make up our logo are designed to resemble and call to mind speech bubbles, representing the honest and transparent communication that sits at the heart of our person-centered approach.



If you pay attention to the negative space between the shapes, you'll also notice a subtle 'C', for Connective.

We've been excited to see service users, staff, and community partners from across the organization and our regions respond positively to our name change.

On the right are a few of our favourite highlights.

"Some service users have started using the phrase, 'We are Connective because we are all connected'."

"The name Connective sounds like it includes everyone. People respected that we were trying to be more inclusive."

"The name has become a sort of catch phrase – 'Well, we are Connective, right?' – for creating new partnerships or strengthening existing ones."

"Congratulations on this announcement! It's an honor to work with your organization, and your new name comes at a pivotal time for essential services work."

"The name Connective removes stigma. It's a name that helps to overcome barriers."

"The new name better represents what we do, so the community understood better how we're connecting clients to what they need."



New Supportive Housing in Prince George, Surrey, and Vancouver

COMMUNITIES IN CRISIS

Despite the crucial role that housing plays in the strength of our communities, the reality for many across BC & the Yukon is that safe, stable, and appropriate housing is far from certain.

This crisis has touched those from all walks of life, but disproportionately affected those at the crossroads of multiple, complex social issues.

It's for all these reasons that now, more than ever, Connective's work in this area is so important, and why we were especially proud and excited to announce three new supportive housing programs in partnership with BC Housing.

WHAT IS SUPPORTIVE HOUSING?

Supportive Housing provides a home with 24/7 support to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness. It offers person-centered, on-site support for people with varying health and personal needs, with the goal of maintaining housing stability. Supports could include outreach workers, wellness checks, life skills training, employment assistance, or connection and referral to community services and support groups.

Supportive housing strives to remove the barriers that can often block people from accessing housing – everything from damage deposits and proof of income to restrictions around the use of illicit drugs. It puts aside the circumstances someone may find themselves in and allows them to have housing in the way that they need housing.



Across these three new projects, individuals will receive 24/7 on-site support from trained tenant support workers who will assist residents with solution focused services to meet their self-identified needs and goals. The programs will take a harm-reduction based approach, employing non-judgmental and non-coercive strategies and tools to provide those who use substances a choice of how they will minimize harm.

It is an honour to have been selected to operate these programs, and to do so as visitors on Indigenous land, and we are committed to providing culturally appropriate services.

"When individuals feel safe and welcomed, and have their basic needs met, they can build trust and from there can work toward setting and achieving their goals.

Longer term, our programs will impact the communities they're in by decreasing homelessness and increasing the housing stability of the residents, which will in turn reduce incidents of crisis services, such as hospital stays, psychiatric care, and involvement with the justice system."

– Jerri Morricks, Senior Manager

PRINCE GEORGE

Projected Opening: June 2022

Units: 50

Purpose Built

SURREY

Projected Opening: Summer 2022

Units: 26

Converted Hotel

VANCOUVER

Projected Opening: Summer 2022

Units: 65

Converted Hotel





A Reentry into Youth Programming with Teak & Sage House

Alongside our many other exciting updates, we were also thrilled to build our partnership with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) and embark on two new youth serving programs, Teak and Sage House.

While this avenue is new for Connective in recent years, across our history we've supported youth incarcerated at the Burnaby Youth Custody Centre through our Youth Advocacy Program, provided Youth Court support, delivered the In It Together youth gang prevention program, and initially served a younger population through our Vancouver Apartments and Vancouver Outreach programs.

Teak and Sage Houses allow us to leverage our extensive history providing personalized, wraparound, and transitional services, while reaching further in support of our

communities and addressing the service gap experienced by those transitioning between youth and adult services.

By supporting individuals while under the care of MCFD, we can minimize any changes they experience on the front end as they transition to adult services in the back end. We can do this through stability in their care team, home environment, and community setting. This consistency can be huge to those navigating what may be a challenging period in their life.

The unique needs of residents will be met by individualized, outcome focused, and best practice informed care that provides a safe and secure environment with opportunities for improved social interaction. Through the provision of support, both Teak and Sage will offer enhanced capacity to the families of the individuals supported, so they can focus on what matters most – being a family.

Whitehorse Residential Support, A Yukon First

This past year we were honoured to expand our continuum of support in the Yukon, with the introduction of our Whitehorse Residential Support Program.

The program provides a home-like environment and 24/7 supervision and support to an individual with complex needs, so they can work toward independence and achieving their goals.

"I've been so excited to raise this new program, which is the first of its kind in Yukon. Our staff are committed to supporting Victoria to live in the community with a positive approach and healthy decision making."

— Liliane Ferreira, Program Manager

For Liliane and the team at WRS, establishing the program without local precedent was both a challenge and an opportunity, as



typically, those facing similar situations and barriers would be forced to leave the territory to access services they required. WRS has allowed the current resident, Victoria, to return to her community after several years away. "I felt relieved. I was missing home a lot, and feeling out of place...Now that I'm back at home in Whitehorse I feel recuperated and back on my feet again with my family and friends."

Now coming up on the first year of operation, tremendous strides have been made. Victoria has shown proactive and enthusiastic engagement with the program and community.



"It helped me gain my confidence, and my positive outlook of myself. They're supporting me and my needs and in everyday tasks, and I just feel appreciated and supported in any way that I need."

— Victoria, WRS Program Participant

Her progress toward greater independence has been exponential. Program staff are excited to find more opportunities to help connect Victoria with her First Nations culture and community, and are hopeful to grow the program and support more individuals in the years to come.

'Now They See Me on The Other Side': The Impact of Peer Mentorship

Our Peer Mentor program works to support individuals as they transition from institutions into a community setting, providing positive role modelling and a shared understanding of lived experience.

STEPHEN'S STORY

Stephen had struggled with problems cascading from substance use for much of his adult life – from the time he was 18 to the last time he was in jail, at age 40. Over the years he has navigated homelessness, experiences with the justice system, and challenges with family life.

Thinking on his last period in jail, Stephen recalls, "I did a lot of self-reflection, and realized that I needed to make some drastic changes in my life." Through counselling and Peer Mentors, Stephen assembled a team and together, they built a roadmap for success. Stephen worked with the Mentors for a few months while in custody and was supported for another 4 months after his release, where they helped him with rides to his appointments, and provided wraparound supports.

On the impact of the Peer Mentors, Stephen recounts how,

"The biggest thing was the willingness to just walk beside me no matter what...I didn't feel like I was judged or less than, it felt like they were just friends helping me out. I really appreciated that."

Now, a year and a half later, Stephen remains clean and sober and has himself become a Peer Mentor. His journey is a striking example of the multiplying power of social change.

"I get to go and pick up guys like me from the jail, and I get to offer support to them. Part of that is sharing my story. It holds a lot of weight with those guys...some of them have seen me in custody or in active addiction and now they see me on the other side of it, helping other people, and working with them to give back...I don't know what more powerful of a message there could be."



For Stephen, he's both eager and thankful for this opportunity.

"I have a lot of gratitude in my heart, and I have a lot of hope. And that was all because of the support and the work I've done. To the people that are struggling – there is a way out. Don't give up hope."

Ensuring All Are Welcome

Part of becoming Connective was a desire to foreground our commitment to being here for everyone – at every stage, in any circumstance. The following examples demonstrate two different ways that our promise of inclusivity plays out.

GUY RICHMOND PLACE RESPONDS TO EMERGENCY NEED

Our Guy Richmond Place (GRP) community-based residential facility welcomed their first transgender resident this past year.

The physical layout at GRP – one of double-bunked rooms – means that housing a transgender client typically wouldn't be feasible. After accepting one resident for placement, however, they made the decision to transition and identify as she/her. Staff didn't want to turn her away, but also wanted to ensure she'd feel comfortable in a shared room, and house with 17 other men. She expressed comfort with the environment, the other residents were very accepting, and she enjoyed her 3 months at the house.

For Jessie Bhatti, the Program Manager at GRP, this case highlights the importance of remaining adaptive.

"With residential work you're constantly dealing with surprises, but you find a solution. Because this is their home. They have to live here, so we have to figure it out. If they have nowhere to go, they go to jail. That's never an option for me."

HAWTHORN'S ACCESSIBILITY RENOVATIONS

One of our newest residential programs, Hawthorn, is an assisted living program for adults with acquired brain injuries. It features four separate suites and 24/7 staff support with the tasks of daily living, with the goal of letting residents live as independently as possible.

In setting up this new space, we invested \$18,000 to make two ground floor suites wheelchair accessible. By viewing all buildings and program spaces as a resource to house a wide variety of potential clients, and not as a place for a specific program or individual, our Infrastructure team is often able to make space for accessibility renovations, allowing us to meet more potential needs.





A Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

At Connective, we believe that the diverse characteristics of individuals enrich our communities, and we strive to create spaces where those differences are valued and celebrated. We recognize that our commitment to creating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive space for all is an ongoing process, and we are committed to continuously improving.

This past year we were excited to take the work and recommendations from our Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmark (GDEIB) committee and DEI audit and build on it with the creation of our new Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) committee. In line with the commitment laid out in our Strategic Plan, the committee was established to provide oversight on the organization's DEI strategy, and monitor, guide, and report on the implementation of DEI goals within each department.

The committee is comprised of volunteer members from across the organization supported by a DEI Executive Sponsor, and supplemented by DEI Department Leads, who report to the committee on the activities of their department and progress towards DEI goals.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS PAST YEAR INCLUDE:

- Integrating DEI into our rebrand, and building accessibility standards into our brand guidelines, brand training, and copy style guides
- Establishing a DEI page on our website to transparently share our DEI commitments, progress, and learning
- Standardizing DEI inclusion in our annual reporting processes and Annual Report
- Completing First Nations 101 training with Yukon staff
- Revising, expanding, and implementing our Cultural Diversity form to allow us to better track diversity targets
- Working to build and strengthen Indigenous partnerships, through initiatives like involving local Nations in program naming processes
- Taking part in the 50-30 challenge, a voluntary challenge aimed at advancing gender parity and increased diversity on boards and in senior leadership roles
- Explicitly building mobility and physical accessibility needs into the screening process for all new program spaces
- Implementing more inclusive recruitment processes, including more accessible job postings, and inquiring about accessibility or accommodation needs in interviews



Toward a Justice System for All

BCFNJC PARTNERSHIP

Throughout the summer of 2021, we were honoured to work alongside the BC First Nations Justice Council and a joint co-op student, Kaymi Yoon-Maxwell (JD/JID Student at the University of Victoria), on a series of research and resource development projects. Kaymi's work focused on advocacy and support to Indigenous people impacted by the justice system.

In September, our Speaker Series was able to leverage this partnership and these projects, bringing together 80+ people in a thought-provoking discussion around the lessons learned through this work, and how justice service providers can better serve Indigenous people.

Together, our presenters explored three themes integral to the topic: Education for service providers, tailored Indigenous service delivery, and multi-sector collaboration. Connective's own Teddy Chan spoke to the importance of collaboration in mitigating systems gaps:

"In multi-sector collaboration, it's the collective willingness to first listen and understand how we can be an extension of each other's expertise. It's the commitment to having those conversations to learn. And as those conversations grow, the projects and impact develop."

— Teddy Chan, Director of Provincial & Northern Initiatives



CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYMPOSIUM

We were also honoured to take part in the 13th National Criminal Justice Symposium, an annual forum for justice leaders to share perspectives and solutions on creating a responsive, accessible, and accountable criminal justice system.

Connective joined some 100 practitioners, professionals, Indigenous-serving organizations, advocates, researchers, and other experts to explore the topic of "Criminal Justice Reform and the Pandemic."

Our CEO, Mark Miller, took part in a multi-disciplinary panel discussion on how the pandemic acted as a stimulus to working holistically, with our Community Support Initiatives serving as the primary case study into cross-sectoral coordination done right.

It was a pleasure to bring our perspectives, expertise, and program examples to this important forum, and to contribute to the recommendations put forward.



Celebrating & Supporting Our Staff

Connective is nothing without the incredible people who comprise our staff teams. They give life to our programs, provide direct support to our service users and communities, and are the conduit through which our vision is brought to life.

While continuing to navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and opioid crisis, and providing outstanding continuity of care, our teams have also led our rename and rebrand project, opened or announced an additional 150+ housing units across BC and the Yukon, welcomed our friends in Kamloops to Connective, and propelled growth into new areas and programs that saw the size of our team grow exponentially.

The care, determination, and perseverance of our people is fundamental to the impacts we can have on our service users. It's why it is so important to us that our staff feel seen, heard, and above all, be given the resources, support, and opportunities to thrive.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE LAST YEAR:

- 89 new employees added to our team
- 20% of employees received a promotion
- 5800+ hours dedicated to employee onboarding
- \$35,000 distributed through our referral bonus program



IN-HOUSE COUNSELLING

Our in-house counselling pilot project, which offered free, one-to-one counselling services and regular team wellness workshops, has been transitioned from limited-time COVID-19 funding to an organization-funded program, so we can continue providing this vital service to all staff.



KEEPING STAFF ENGAGED, INFORMED, AND CONNECTED

Responding directly to staff desire for more connection, engagement, and interactivity across our increasingly expanding teams, we began a project to bring a new internal communications platform to staff – Workvivo. This world-renowned platform will give all staff opportunities for meaningful and fun communication and connection, regardless of physical location.



INCREASING SALARIES AND IMPROVING BENEFITS

We maintained our Living Wage Employer status, improved benefits for all staff, raised exempt salaries by 2%, and saw our unionized staff receive a 2% general wage increase, and a 3.4% low wage redress.



RECOGNIZING STAFF FOR GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

This year, staff continued to recognize and celebrate one another for demonstrating our core values through our High Five program. Throughout the year, over 235 High Fives were shared across the organization.



LIFESTYLE SPENDING ACCOUNT & WORK FROM HOME FUND

To better support the work-life balance of our dedicated staff teams, and to assist those working from home during the pandemic with the cost of home office setups, lifestyle spending accounts were introduced for permanent unionized and exempt staff.



UNLOCKING FINANCIAL FREEDOM

Our Payroll team was thrilled to bring all full and part-time staff a new way to get paid, with Dayforce Wallet. This exciting new employee benefit allows access pay as soon as it's earned, without the need to wait until payday, allowing for better peace of mind in responding to financial needs. The team is eager to extend this benefit to casual staff in the coming months.

Dedication to Continuous Improvement

Across the organization, we recognize that if we want to continue to weave a strong social safety net that meets the evolving needs of everyone who walks through our doors, we need to maintain our innovative and dynamic approach to service delivery. This means exercising humility, continuing to ask questions, and committing to learning all that we can, to enhance all that we do. In addition to the regular and ongoing training that our teams participate in, this past year we worked with community partners to offer staff additional learning opportunities, such as: Indigenous History and Colonization, Coping with COVID-19 Anxiety, and Navigating Legal Issues in Mental Health.

HOME SHARE TRAINS MORE PROVIDERS

This year the team developed an enhanced training plan to address potential gaps in experience or knowledge that potential Home Share providers may have. It includes topics like medication administration and health and safety management, and a range of optional topics depending on experience and who providers would like to support.

These enhancements have allowed the program to take on more providers, and in turn, offer a quick and direct response to the ongoing housing crisis across our regions by increasing the availability of affordable, appropriate housing.

MANDT TRAINING

Across the organization this past year, 168 staff and 49 Home Share providers also completed the MANDT System of training, a healthy relationship based, learning & development platform delivered by our expert in-house trainers and designed to promote prevention, de-escalation and intervention approaches.



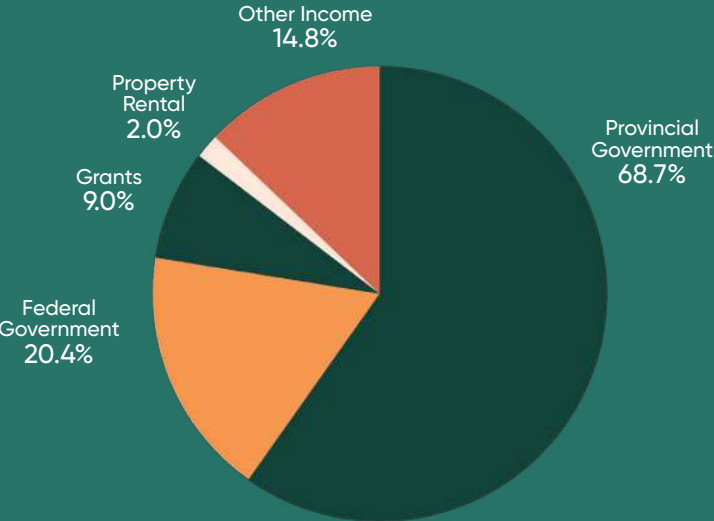
Investing in Our Present & Future

This year, we continued to demonstrate our commitment to the safety, wellbeing, and vitality of our community by investing heavily in COVID-19 related supports, including distributing more than 28,000 masks across our regions and programs. We acquired several new buildings to house our expanding programs and teams, began an extensive process to upgrade our server and create a robust, modern IT infrastructure, and made a number of enhancements to staffing and support, to ensure that we can continue working effectively toward our vision.

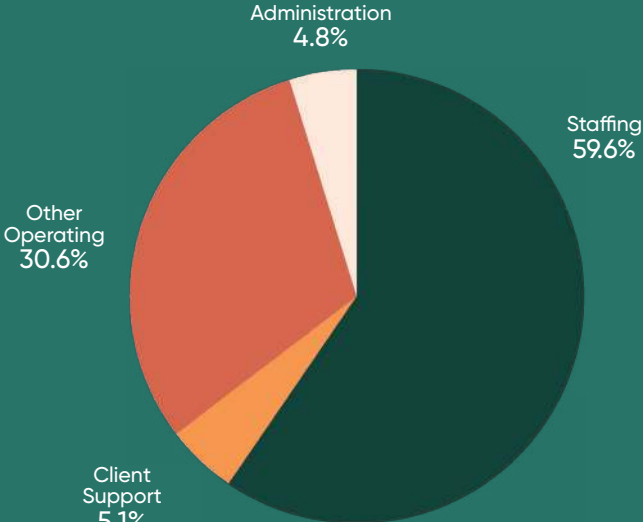
For our most recent audited financial statements, please visit our [website](#).

- 43% Increase in revenue
- 37% Increase in staffing
- 88% Increase in client support

FUNDING BY SOURCE



EXPENSES BY CATEGORY





Looking Ahead

A lot has changed these last few years to lead us to where we stand today. With a new name and visual identity, numerous new programs and types of service delivery, and entirely new regions in which we're bringing our innovative continuum of care, this next year feels like the start of a distinctive and exciting next chapter in our organization's history.

As we progress into the 2022-23 year, there's a lot to be excited about. Several of the programs announced recently and detailed in this report will begin operation. Perhaps most notably, our three new supportive housing projects will bring safe and secure housing to 141 individuals across Prince George, Vancouver, and Surrey.

As we look beyond these next few months, our teams are excited for:

- Opportunities to improve our client outcomes by further developing innovative housing options, while building upon our collaborative partnerships
- The implementation of a new Learning Management System to bring new efficiencies to our employee onboarding and training processes
- Our long-awaited in-person Leadership Gathering, to bring together key individuals for a two-day deep dive on improving the delivery and uptake of person-centered services to clients with complex needs
- The ongoing integration of diversity, equity, and inclusion into and across our organization, as we continue to take steps forward on our journey toward greater and more proactive inclusivity
- An infrastructure plan that will see \$240,000 directed toward capital investments and property upgrades

The achievements shared throughout this report, just a handful of many from an inspiring year, would not be possible without the collective efforts of our Board of Directors, senior leadership, staff, Home Share providers, volunteers, funders, community partners, and service users. Thanks to each and every one of you for being such important members of our team & community at Connective.

As we continue to work toward our vision of a safe, healthy, and inclusive community for all, we know there is much to be done. We also know, as our staff have demonstrated year over year, that we're ready to roll up our sleeves and connect the dots, take a chance, and go where others won't; to work collaboratively with our vast network of partners, challenge flawed systems, and ensure that no one slips through the cracks.

We can't wait to see what this next year brings!



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