

405 Alexander | Report to the Community

Welcome to our seventh edition of our 405 Alexander Report to the Community! As we brace for the arrival of colder temperatures and the unique challenges they bring, we're reflecting on having reached our two-year anniversary of program operation! Together, our service users, staff, and community partners have accomplished a great deal in that time, and we couldn't be prouder of our collective progress.

In this issue we'll highlight some recent program initiatives, offer a final update on our implementation of the Coroner's Inquest recommendations, spotlight the work of a valued community partner, and more!

Connective assumed operation of 405 Alexander in October 2022. Since then,
CONNECTIVE STAFF HAVE

Served
222,413

Meals

On-site and
takeaway dinners

Hosted
30,064

Stays

In our 54
emergency beds

Distributed
18,095

Harm Reduction Items

From condoms
to naloxone kits

Averted
79

Overdoses

Through naloxone
administration

405'S GOT TALENT:

The Inaugural Service User Talent Show

On October 7, service users and staff got together for a night of sharing and celebration. The event was *405's Got Talent*, and featured a varied lineup of talented performers.

Planning was a team effort, but led in large part by Israr, a 405 Support Worker. The idea came from a chat between service users, about singing. One thing led to another, and before Israr knew it, someone had broken into song.

"The whole area, which had been abuzz with lively chatter, fell silent. You could hear a pin drop. When she had finished singing, it was as if a dream had ended. Everyone erupted into applause."

Looking to capture the joy sparked by this moment and give others the chance to proudly showcase their own talents, Israr floated the idea, and thus, *405's Got Talent* was born.

"There's nothing quite like seeing smiles on the faces of those we serve." – Israr, Support Worker

In addition to recruiting talent for the show, staff assembled a delicious menu of salmon, bannock, whitefish cakes, dried moose (from KDFN), cookies (from Mental Wellness) and more!

The show went off without a hitch, and featured a range of incredible talents. All participants were given certificates, and a panel of 3 judges awarded 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place with gift cards, customized t-shirts, and lifetime bragging rights.

"People were elated. I'm glad we could bring a smile their faces, and I hope it's something they will fondly remember for a long time."



405's Got Talent

YUKON CORONER'S INQUEST

Recommendation Implementation Progress

While continuing to reflect on the complex challenges and profound pain highlighted by the Inquest into the deaths of Cassandra Warville, Myranda Tizya-Charlie, Josephine Elizabeth Hager, and Darla Skookum, we have been working diligently [since our last update](#) to finalize a few remaining actions.

Now, at the conclusion of the recommendation implementation period, we are pleased to offer this comprehensive summary of our progress to date, acknowledge the work that lies ahead, and reaffirm our ongoing commitment to building a legacy of meaningful change from the deaths of those we mourn.

The work that has defined these last six months is deeply significant. In taking these steps, and fulfilling the jury's eight recommendations, we have built a stronger and more resilient program at 405 Alexander.

1. Policy Review

We updated program policies and procedures based on input from an external analyst, and feedback from service users, community partners, and staff. This included a review of the Canadian shelter landscape and the newly published [Human Rights-Based, Gender-Sensitive National Standards for Emergency Shelters](#).

Looking Forward: We will continue to assess policies and procedures, revising as needed to better meet evolving community needs.

2. Training Review

Following the same collaborative assessment approach as with our policies, we developed an annual training plan with expanded opportunities for staff. New proposals, including Cultural Humility Training led by CYFN, were also submitted to the Yukon Government for consideration.

Looking Forward: We will continue to assess training needs and explore new ways to support staff in delivering person-centred, culturally safe services.

3. Staffing Priorities

We revised hiring practices to prioritize Yukon First Nations and Indigenous peoples, and reflected this clearly in our job postings. A working group with our partners at CYFN has also been established, to support continuous improvement in this area.

Looking Forward: We will continue to refine our approach through feedback and data analysis, while exploring new ways to increase Yukon First Nations representation.

4. Evaluation

The Yukon Government leads this recommendation, and we have collaborated via weekly meetings with Health and Social Services to discuss progress and challenges.

Looking Forward: We will continue supporting the Yukon Government's efforts, to the best of our ability.

5. Critical Incident Review

We expanded our approach to this recommendation by reviewing our incident reporting procedures and establishing a standardized reporting format to Health and Social Services.

Looking Forward: The Yukon Government will lead an external review, and we have provided feedback on the process.

6. Grief & Loss Supports

The Yukon Government led community engagement following the Inquest and where requested, we've met directly with First Nations. Their generous and candid feedback has been instrumental in shaping our approach.

We've also offered in-person counselling for all Yukon staff, alongside pre-existing remote service and employee benefit program-funded options.

Looking Forward: We are eager to continue building relationships and engaging in dialogue with Yukon First Nations, and finding ways to enhance supports for staff.

7. Communication

Monthly Connection Meetings have been implemented, fostering valuable dialogue and feedback from shelter users. Included among this was the idea to convert a first-floor lounge into a permanent, externally accessible programming space.

Our shift exchange process was also revised, following the collection and analysis of staff feedback.

Looking Forward: We will continue holding Monthly Connection Meetings and have scheduled another round of shift exchange feedback and review for November.

For any organizations interested in offering programming in our newly redesigned first-floor space, **please contact:**

Gigi McKee

✉ gigi.mckee@connective.ca

8. Safe Spaces

We have made progress toward enhancing safety through the revision of our policies, procedures, and training. While we have sought additional input from local organizations, more time has been requested for engagement.

Looking Forward: We remain committed to continuing this engagement work, and to collaborating with local partners to strengthen service networks and supports.

While some of this work was completed internally, most of it benefitted from the valued perspectives, insights, and contributions from the local community. We want to express our sincere gratitude to everyone who shared their time and expertise and who helped shape our responses to these recommendations.

Everyone from our service users, staff, and partners at CYFN, to the leadership of Yukon First Nations who directly engaged with us, and a wide variety of community social services providers delivering harm reduction and health services – these outcomes would not have been possible without you.

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

FETAL ALCOHOL SYNDROME SOCIETY YUKON

Building Community Through Inclusion



Since 1996, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Society Yukon (FASSY) has worked to support individuals with FASD, raise awareness of the disorder, and educate members of the public about its complexities.

Speaking with Neena MacKinnon, Executive Director, she is quick to highlight that although only 4% of Canadians are diagnosed with FASD, "that is a very, very low number. It's definitely higher, as many people are undiagnosed."

50+ years of research has revealed that FASD can vary wildly from person to person. With impacts on everything from memory to impulse control and emotional regulation, it can be tough to recognize.

"There are a ton of people currently living and struggling with the belief that they have a set of character flaws. And they just don't realize that, really, there is something else going on."

THE OUT AND ABOUT PROGRAM

FASSY's Out and About program started in 2019. The idea was simple – to offer sober mental wellness activities in the evenings and on weekends, and "create meaningful opportunities for folks to connect with each other when they might otherwise feel isolated."

Today, the calendar of monthly activities includes a little something for everyone – from laser tag and glassblowing classes to quieter options like sewing nights with an Elder. Neena hopes that flexibility and diversity make it easier to engage with.

"People can pick and choose – if this isn't the right event for you, maybe next is. We want people on all levels of the spectrum to benefit."

A CALL FOR UNDERSTANDING

Neena hopes that FASSY can help foster a more compassionate community. "If people understood FASD, we'd have more volunteers, fewer barriers, and more opportunities...it would be amazing if we didn't need Out and About. If instead, the broader community was set up to support everyone, no matter how their brain works."

Until then, Out and About continues to offer a lifeline for connection, community, and fun when it's needed most.



Past Out and About Activities



Best of all, there's no diagnosis needed to participate – just a willingness to connect. The program provides a safe place for people of all neurodiversities to build friendships and have fun.

To learn more about FASSY & FASD:

ADDRESS

205 Black Street, Whitehorse, Y1A 2M8

HOURS

Monday to Friday, 8:30 AM – 5:00 PM

CONTACT

867.393.4948

info@fassy.org

www.fassy.org



BEADS AND BANNOCK

Cultural Programming at 405 Alexander



Council of Yukon
First Nations

Recognizing the role culture plays in healing, growth, and resilience for our Indigenous residents and service users, we are honoured to partner with the Council of Yukon First Nations (CYFN) to provide cultural support and programming at 405 Alexander.

Support encompasses everything from traditional meal preparation to arts instruction, smudging, prayer circles, and individual counselling.

“Culture is an important protective factor in everyone's lives, helping people deal with stressors and build resiliency.”

- Yukon Member of Connective's Indigenous Advisory Committee



Orange Shirt Day at 405 Alexander

Recent Updates:

Introducing..New Cultural Support Workers!

This last quarter, CYFN was pleased to welcome two new Cultural Support Workers to the team, **Russell Andre** and **Kellie Horassi**. Together, they've worked to bring traditional meals, beading and painting workshops, and music into the programming spaces at 405 Alexander.

They also worked together to plan this year's Orange Shirt Day activities, pictured below!

Coming Soon...Mural at 405 Alexander!

Work will soon begin on an 8 x 16 foot mural in 405 Alexander's dining hall! **Violet Gatensby** has been contracted to complete this project.

Violet is Inland Tlingit artist, from the Carcross / Tagish First Nation. Art has been a part of her life from a young age, and her work draws from traditional stories and knowledge of the land.

Violet has garnered significant recognition for her work, and we are thrilled to see how she enlivens 405's dining hall. Stay tuned for an update on this project in our next newsletter!

DONATION DRIVE

Seeking: Winter Gear

As temperatures drop and snow begins to fall, there are many in the community who lack the winter gear required to keep warm. This can cause severe discomfort and can lead to more serious health problems.

To support individuals accessing 405 Alexander, we are asking anyone with new or gently used, warm winter gear to consider donating!



We are looking for:



- Base Layers
- Boots
- Fleece Items
- Gloves
- Jackets
- Outer Pants
- Scarves
- Toques
- Warm Socks



Donations can be dropped off at
405 Alexander, between 7AM - 4:30PM

