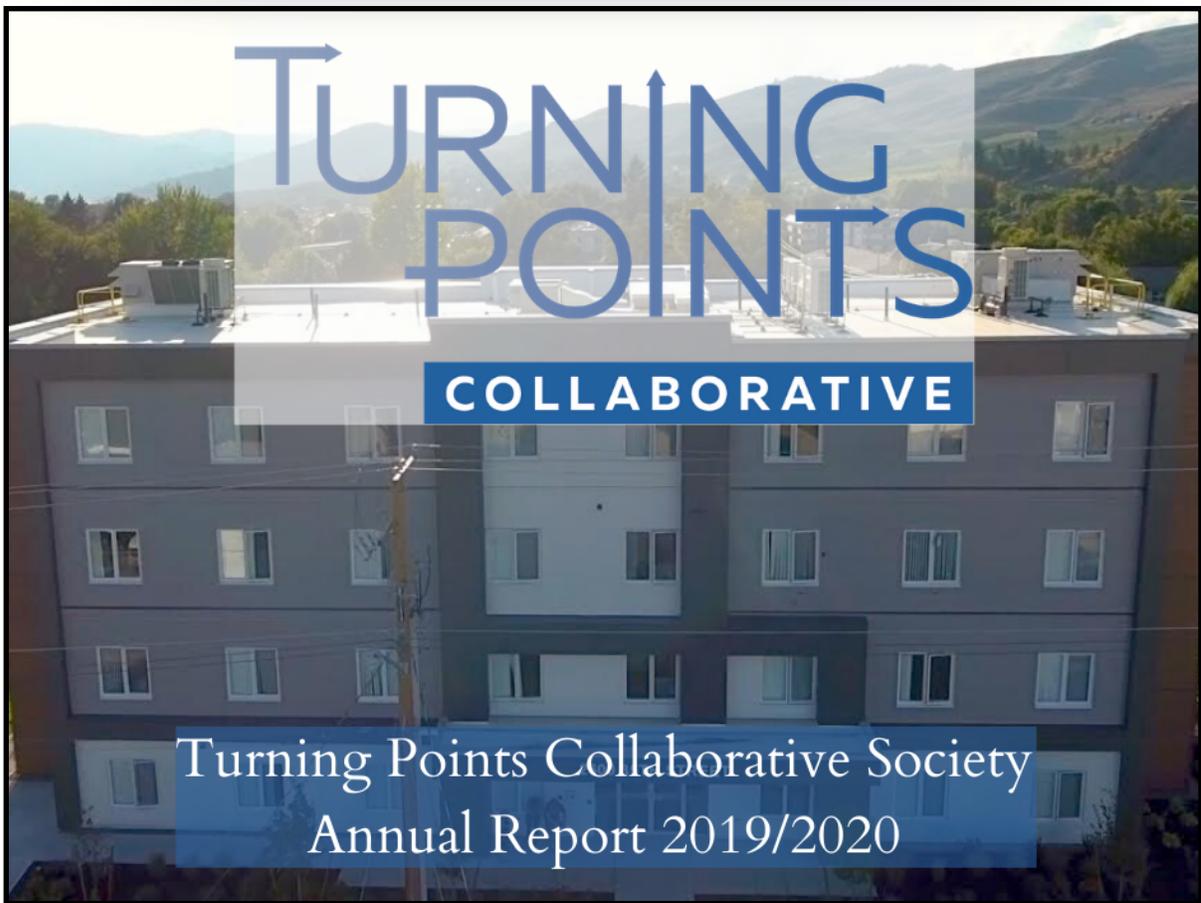




Building Community; Strengthening People



2019/20 Annual Report  
For the Fiscal Year Ending March 31, 2020 | Vernon, British Columbia

Prepared and submitted by: Senior Management Team | Turning Points Collaborative Society  
#102 3301 24ave | VERNON BC, V1T 9S8 | TEL 250 542 3555 | FAX 250 542 4501 |  
[www.turningpoints.ngo](http://www.turningpoints.ngo)

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### *INTRODUCTORY SECTION*

**Leadership Team**  
**Our Mission Statement**  
**Message From the Board Chair**  
**Message From the Executive Director**  
**2017-2020 Strategic Plan Progress Report**  
**Financial Report**  
**Board, Staff and Community Committees**

### *PROGRAM SUMMARIES*

**Housing Services**  
**Shelter Services**  
**Addiction Recovery Services**  
**Outreach Services**  
**Peer Services**  
**Employment Services**  
**Community Education and Awareness**  
**Testimonials**

### *THANK YOUs*

***“Turning Points  
Collaborative  
Society succeeds  
because of our  
passionate team”***

***-Kevin Robertson, Board Chair, Turning  
Points Collaborative Society***



Turning Points Collaborative Society has been providing vital services to Vernon and surrounding communities since 1957.



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Kevin Robertson/Board Chair**  
**Blair Peden**  
**Brynna Hambly**  
**Cheryl Schmidt**  
**Juliette Cunningham**  
**Nicola Hodelet**  
**Rob Sawatzky**

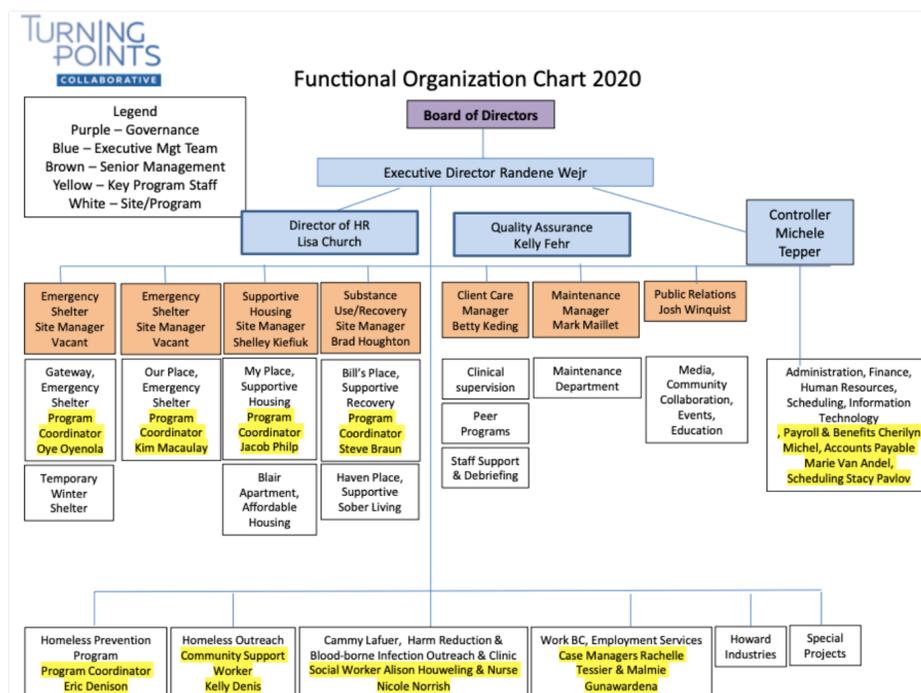
To contact the board email: [board@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:board@turningpoints.ngo)

## EXECUTIVE MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Randene Wejr/Executive Director** ..... [randene.wejr@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:randene.wejr@turningpoints.ngo)  
**Lisa Church/Director of Human Resources** ..... [lisa.church@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:lisa.church@turningpoints.ngo)  
**Michelle Tepper/ Controller** ..... [michele.tepper@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:michele.tepper@turningpoints.ngo)  
**Kelly Fehr/Director of Operations** ..... [kelly.fehr@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:kelly.fehr@turningpoints.ngo)

## SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

**Shelley Kiefiuk/My Place, Blair Apartment Manager** ..... [shelley.kiefiuk@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:shelley.kiefiuk@turningpoints.ngo)  
**Brad Houghton/Manager of Addiction's Services** ..... [bradley.houghton@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:bradley.houghton@turningpoints.ngo)  
**Betty Keding / Client Care Manager** ..... [betty.keding@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:betty.keding@turningpoints.ngo)  
**Josh Winquist/Director of Public Relations** ..... [josh.winquist@turningpoints.ngo](mailto:josh.winquist@turningpoints.ngo)



## MISSION STATEMENT

### OUR MISSION

To promote and lead effective, just and humane responses to the causes and consequences of crime and poverty by working directly with individuals, service providers and the broader community.

### OUR VISION

Building community; strengthening people.

### OUR MANDATE

- To provide safe and supportive housing alternatives that meet the needs of people who are homeless, at risk of being homeless or who are marginally housed.
- To promote the health and safety of our community through social development and public education activities.
- To build and deliver programs and services to strengthen life skills and provide opportunities for people in need.
- To develop and deliver programs and resources that provide a continuum of recovery services

### OUR VALUES

- People have the right to live in a safe and peaceful society as well as a responsibility implied by the right to respect the law.
- Every person has intrinsic value and has the right to be treated with dignity, equity, fairness and compassion, without discrimination.
- Every person has the potential to become a responsible citizen.
- Every person has the right and the responsibility to be informed about, and involved in, the criminal justice process.
- Justice is best served through measures that resolve conflicts, repair harm, and restore peaceful relations in society.
- Independent, autonomous non-government voluntary organizations have a vital role in the criminal justice process.

## MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR



As the Board President of Turning Points Collaborative Society, I am privileged to have management, staff, and board members that are driven to assist those who are homeless, at risk of homelessness, or seeking addiction recovery services.

The previous year was one of tremendous growth in both programs and infrastructure. This year the focus was squarely about managing that growth. This involved adding new staff, training existing staff, redefining roles, and reorganizing our management structure. The result has been an organization that has grown tremendously in the last few years (more than doubled both funding and staff), yet it is poised to move forward purposefully and sustainably.

As we come to the first anniversary of both My Place and Our Place opening, it is stunning how many lives these new programs have positively affected in such a short period of time. Specifically, it has been amazing to hear the stories about people who previously couldn't access our services due to infrastructure limitations on accessibility, pets, and couples embracing the supports that we now offer. As with any opening there were challenges faced by staff and clients, but they have all shown tremendous flexibility and dedication to work through the challenges.

This year has also seen an expansion of existing services and development of new programs. Additions such as the new peer support program continue to solidify the many benefits that our clients have to offer each other. In addition, we have seen the persistent benefits of our programs, such as the continued outreach of the Cammy LaFleur Clinic to reduce harm and our addiction recovery programs that are preparing clients for a new way of life.

The Board of Directors has leaned on the experience of its members to have spirited discussion around issues, make the tough decisions, and ultimately guide the organization towards the future. I thank my fellow board members for volunteering their time, bringing their passion to every meeting, and for being dedicated to the continued success of this organization.

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with both Randene and Kelly throughout this year in their roles as co-Executive Directors.

For the upcoming year, Kelly has transitioned to a new position within the organization and we look forward to his continued success in this new role. Randene has transitioned to become the sole Executive Director of the organization. The board has full confidence in Randene and knows that she will continue to shine in her leadership position. I look forward to working with Randene throughout the upcoming year as her ability to build, strengthen, and empower her leadership team is unparalleled.

Turning Points Collaborative Society succeeds because of our passionate team, to that end I thank all of our team members for their dedication over this last year and look forward to our team members continuing to grow with us as we find new ways to assist our clients. Your passion is reshaping the lives of our clients. The upcoming year will see the organization continue to streamline its operations and set itself up to take advantage of future opportunities to alter the lives of those we serve.

## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



At the end of the fiscal year, we were faced with the COVID-19 pandemic and TPCS staff members shone in their leadership roles in the community of Vernon.

We were the first amalgamated shelter in the province; we were the first non-profit in British Columbia to incorporate hand-washing stations and staff scrubs at all of our sites.

TPCS was the first non-profit housing agency in British Columbia to secure motel and hotel beds for vulnerable clients to move into, and for symptomatic clients to

isolate while they awaited their COVID-19 test results.

Peers have been a huge part of our COVID response, supporting the clients at the motels/hotels, assisting with meal deliveries, handing out harm reduction supplies to folks in isolation and buddying up with people so they don't use alone.

TPCS will continue to focus on growing our housing services over the next several years. At the same time, we must focus on increasing our addictions and mental health services as we have seen a huge increase in substance use and mental un-wellness since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

We must also continue to strive to educate the public and reduce the stigma of substance use and mental health disorders.

While drug supplies continue to get dirtier and dirtier with COVID-19 disrupting supply chains, people are overdosing and dying at unprecedented rates from the Opioid Crisis pandemic.

People are choosing to use alone and in shame. We have the responsibility to continue to provide housing first options and to reduce stigma so that our folks not only survive but thrive as we have seen with My Place.

I am extremely blessed to work for and with an agency, Board and Leadership team that, not only allows us to do this work but expects and supports it. Thank you to the Board and the Leadership team for fully responding to these obligations. We are making a difference.

With gratitude,

Randene Wejr

Executive Director

# TURNING POINTS

COLLABORATIVE



*“We have such dedicated staff that have put so much into this organization over the past number of years. I am so proud of the work we are doing.”* — Randene Wejr, Executive Director, Turning Points Collaborative Society

## 2017-2020 STRATEGIC PLAN & PROGRESS REPORT

In 2017, the Board of Directors embarked on a comprehensive strategic planning session. Out of the session, the following key themes emerged:

1. Support community housing strategies;
2. Expand community education and awareness; and
3. Diversify funding to better support the people we serve and our community as a whole.
4. Growth Management (added to the Strategic Plan in January 2020)



Ongoing

Completed

Expand community education and awareness	Status	Notes
Presentations	Completed 2019/20	City of Vernon Community Safety Office Summer Safety Ambassadors City of Vernon Council Overdose Prevention Day Vernon Library Vernon Urgent Primary Care
Presentations	Completed 2018/19	City of Vernon Council Downtown Vernon Association, Board of Directors Fulton School/Kalamalka School/Seaton School/Vernon Alternative School/Okanagan College Interior Health Kal Tire Kal Rotary Club/Silver Star Rotary Club Lutheran Church Women's Group RCMP Vernon Library Vernon Upper Room Mission Society

Cont. on next page

<b>Diversify funding to better support the people we serve and our community as a whole</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Interior Health: Cammy Lafleur Clinic & Outreach	Completed 2019/20	Interior Health transferred the contract to TPCS in early 2019 to operate until a Request for Proposals was released in the fall. The program which focuses on blood borne pathogen education and harm reduction fits well within the stream of programs provided by TPCS.
Community Action Initiative: Peer Supports	Completed 2018/19	April 2018 contract secured for peer education and development to support peer work within overdose prevention programming.
Community Futures: Employment Services	Completed 2018/19	New Employment Services contract awarded in March 2019.
Interior Health: Supported Housing supports	Completed 2018/19	A bridging contract to support the Creekside, supportive housing program was secured in March 2019.

<b>Growth Management</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Staff Development	Ongoing	Considering significant organizational growth over the period of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan a focus on succession planning and developing staff has been instituted.
Reorganization	Completed 2019/20	Considering significant organizational growth over the period of the 2017-2020 Strategic Plan a review of the organizational structure was required. As a result of the review in early 2020 TPCS reorganized the administration and team lead structure. In Feb/Mar 2020 the Society moved to a single Executive Director model and instituted Director of Operations and Director of Human Resources positions.

## FINANCIAL REPORT

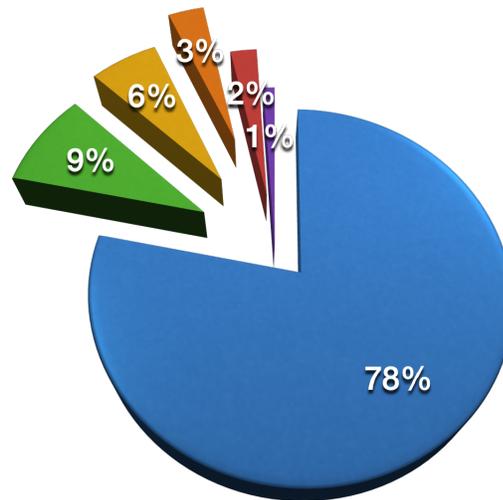


Turning Points Collaborative Society is a nonprofit organization. The Society receives funds through donations, grants, government contracts and room and board.

The following graphs breakdown where the Society received its funds for 2019/20 and where those funds were allocated.

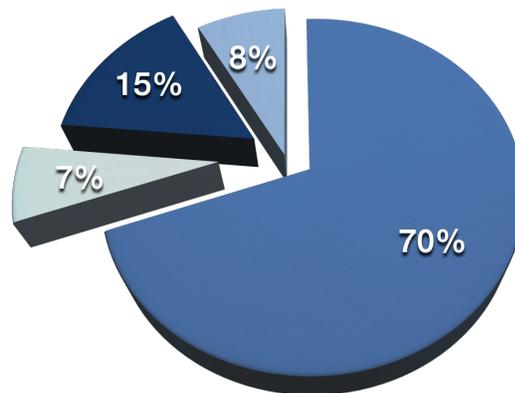
### Revenues 2019/20 Fiscal Year

- BC Housing
- Client Room & Board
- Interior Health
- Community Futures
- Min. of Social Development & Poverty Reduction
- Other Income



### Expenditures 2019/20 Fiscal

- Wages & Benefits
- Client Support
- Utilities & Maintenance
- Insurance & Admin



The Finance team at TPCS consists of three individuals. Michele Tepper is the Controller and manages financials, budgets, banking and insurance needs for the organization. Cherilynn Mitchell is responsible for payroll and benefits. Marie Van Andel manages the accounts payable and purchasing functions. All Finance team members bring a diversified set of skills to their roles and are happy to assist others as required.

## COMMITTEES AND COMMISSIONS

### COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD

#### **Finance Committee:**

To provide monthly oversight of financial statements prior to Board meetings;

To assist with financial planning, especially regarding surplus assets;

To present approved financial documents to the Board of Directors at Board meetings:

- Meets monthly the day prior to Board meetings and meets in months when there is no Board meeting
- Membership: Cheryl Schmidt, Kevin Robertson, Robert Sawatzky

#### **Board Development/Nomination:**

To provide ongoing evaluation strategy for internal Board use;

To identify community members to fill Board vacancies:

- Committee meets at least three times per year
- membership: Robert Sawatzky, Blair Peden

#### **Human Resources Committee:**

To provide strategies around Human Resources;

To complete annual Co-Executive Directors evaluation;

To assist in the development of annual Executive Directors work plan priorities:

- Committee meets at least twice yearly
- membership: Kevin Robertson, Robert Sawatzky, Brynna Hambly

Board of Directors (L to R Top Row): Cheryl Schmidt, Brynna Hambly, Robert Sawatzky, Blair Peden, Juliette Cunningham

(L to R Bottom Row): Board Chair, Kevin Robertson, Nicola Hodelet (picture not available)



## INTERNAL COMMITTEES

### **Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee:**

Staff Representatives: Kelly Fehr, Kim Adams, Bob Crozier, David Mark

### **Labour/Management Committee:**

Staff Representatives: Randene Wejr, Kelly Fehr, Bob Crozier

### **Leadership Committee**

Staff Representatives: Randene Wejr, Kelly Fehr, Shelley Kiefiuk, Brad Houghton, Lisa Church

## EXTERNAL COMMITTEES

### **Coordinated Access Table (Provincial Supported Housing Coordination), Vernon Lead Agency**

Staff Representatives: Shelley Kiefiuk, Lisa Church, Kelly Denis

### **Community Advisory Committee (Provincial Supportive Recovery Services), Vernon Lead Agency**

Staff Representative: Brad Houghton

### **COOL Team (multi-disciplinary/agency outreach team), Lead Agency**

Staff Representative: Kelly Denis/Alternate Representative: Kelly Fehr

### **Bi-annual homelessness census, Lead Agency**

Staff Representative: Kelly Denis/Alternate Representative: Kelly Fehr

### **Vernon Recovery Day, Lead Agency**

Staff Representative: Brad Houghton/Alternate Representative: Kelly Fehr

### **Partners in Action (City of Vernon Collaborative Committee)**

Staff Representative: Kelly Fehr/Alternate Representative: Randene Wejr

### **HART (Provincial Health)**

Staff Representative: Randene Wejr/Alternate Representative: Lisa Church

### **Homelessness Memorial, Coordination Committee**

Staff Representative: Kelly Fehr

### **ShareED Committee (Social Profit-Leadership Collaborative):**

Staff Representative: Randene Wejr

### **Overdose Awareness Day, Committee:**

Staff Representative: Alison Houweling and Lisa Church

### **Sexual Assault Services Committee (Interior Health, RCMP, Social Profit Collaborative):**

Staff Representative: Kelly Fehr

## Centre for Community Collaboration

The Centre for Community Collaboration is our home base.

The Centre also provides a meeting space for a number of community-focused committees. Our goal is to bring municipal/provincial/federal bodies, service providers, philanthropists, local businesses and residents together to create a healthy Vernon.

The programs provided from the Centre include:

- **Homeless Prevention (TPCS)**
- **Homeless Outreach (TPCS)**
- **WorkBC, Employment Services (TPCS)**
- **Cammy LaFleur Outreach (TPCS)**
- **Legal Advocacy (Okanagan Advocacy & Resource Society)**

Turning Points Leadership Team (From L to R) Kelly Fehr, Randene Wejr, Shelley Kiefiuk, Lisa Church, Mark Maillet, Brad Brad Houghton

For further information regarding the collaborative community efforts Turning Points is involved in, refer to the Strategic Planning section of this report or visit our website at [www.turningpoints.ngo](http://www.turningpoints.ngo).



Turning Points Collaborative Society develops and delivers programs and resources that provide a continuum of care in the North Okanagan.



## HOUSING SERVICES

### My Place



My Place is a 52-unit supportive housing complex located at 2600 35<sup>th</sup> street in Vernon B.C.

With 48 single units and 4 couple's units we house a total of 56 residents. Our program is based off the "Housing First" model which offers individuals who struggle with homelessness, mental health and addiction issues stable, affordable, and secure housing, as well as provides those individuals with supportive services and

connections to the community-based supports people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness.

#### Statistics:

Since we opened in June of 2019, we have had a total of eleven residents leave our facility, however only six of them left the program to return to homelessness. Two of our residents with preexisting health conditions passed away, three moved onto different housing options, and six were removed from the program for various reasons. Counting those six residents who left the program to return to homelessness gives us a turnover rate of 10.71% in the first year. Compared to the average turnover rate of 23% of participants who return to homelessness after the first two years in a Housing First complex, we are on track to beat the North American average with a lower turnover rate by the end of our second fiscal year.

Our program is on track to result in more people maintaining their housing than the average Housing First facility. Considering the program of My Place was hand crafted by the site manager and program coordinator with no outside help aside from their own personal research of what Housing First is, I would personally consider the program of My Place to be quite the achievement.

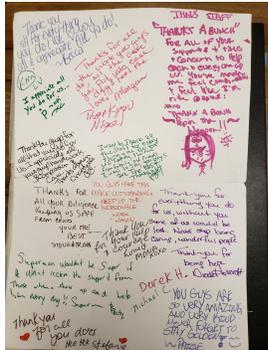
#### Apr. 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights

**Quilt lottery!** We had 2 amazing ladies hand craft several beautiful quilts for the residents of our building. We hosted a lottery where residents would draw a number then when their number was called, they were able to come collect a quilt. It was an amazing experience for everyone involved.

**Deck the halls!** Over the holiday season we hosted a friendly competition between each floor to see who could decorate their area to the fullest! We supplied each floor with the same package of decorations and let everyone fly at it! On Christmas day we gathered as many residents as we could to tour the facility and everyone



voted for the floor they found to be the most festive. We even had a trophy for the winning floor and thus created our first My Place Christmas tradition.



When our country began to lock down due to COVID-19 and new best practices were handed to us daily, our staff and residents came together and adjusted very quickly to the necessary changes. Our residents made it clear to our team how much they appreciated our efforts to keep everyone safe and healthy and did not resist the daily changes at all. Times have been hard for many, but the love and appreciation from our residents became a massive boost to the moral of the My Place team. In these uncertain times it is easy to feel how connected the community within My Place really is.

**In conclusion** we have had one amazing year. I feel like the biggest highlight must be the tremendous growth we have seen in many of our residents. From securing and maintaining permanent employment, to managing addiction issues, to pursuing post-secondary education, and even creating a peer support group that gives back to the community, our site proves that when you give someone stable housing and offer the proper supports through in-depth personalized case plans and care plans, you can create a community and an environment that nurtures change to the fullest.

### 2020/2021 Outlook:

We will continue to work closely with our residents, developing in depth case plans that connect them to the services they need to continue to grow and change their lives for the better. Over the next year we will ensure the vast majority of our residents continue to maintain stable, supportive housing and prevent them from returning to homelessness.

Through developing trusting relationships with our residents, we will continue to help them set and achieve goals and keep their momentum moving forward in a positive direction. Our long-term goal is to eventually help our residents successfully re-enter the housing market. We understand that this can and will take time beyond the next fiscal year for many, but I believe we are not far off from seeing this level of success with some of our folks already.

\*Below are some images of Christmas at My Place



## Blair Apartments



Blair Apartments is a 39-unit affordable housing building located at 3000 28th Avenue, Vernon B.C. The building is available to both men and women, singles and couples who are low-income, in need of affordable housing, and able to live independently.

Residents can access all services and programs delivered through Turning Points Collaborative Society. Referrals and assistance to community resources and programs is provided. Blair Apartments aims to provide a safe, welcoming, supportive and respectful living environment.

### Apr. 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights

In April 2019, Blair Apartments was graced with some funding by BC Housing to create a wonderful square foot gardening space. Along with some help from Brite-land, who constructed and oversaw the development, 18, 4x4 garden plots were created along with a small tool shed for supplies and four large rainwater containers complete with a catch system.

There was an abundance of starter plants donated for the vegetable/herb garden and they were taken full advantage of. Almost 15 residents took part in the community garden project. People were excited, proud of their plots and went to great lengths to care and nurture their garden space as things progressed through summer. The biggest hits were a variety of tomato plants from cherry tomato, grape tomato and beefsteak tomatoes which really flourished.

At one point we were able to donate some to a sister site (Bills place) to ensure nothing went to waste. Green beans, fresh herbs, Cauliflower, Broccoli, a variety of lettuces, radishes, zucchini, spinach, potato and small white onions were all successfully grown and harvested throughout the year.

For many, this was a real opportunity for personal growth, taking responsibility and caring for something.

It brought people together and provided some true solace to be able to spend some time digging in the dirt and forgetting about the busy world around them if only for 30min a day.

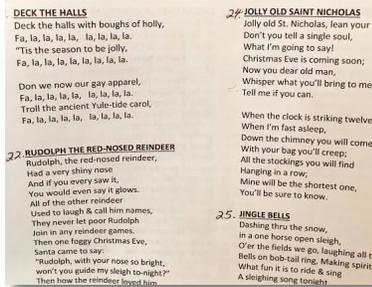
Residents could often be found relaxing, listening to music, reading, tanning in the sun and visiting amongst one another while overlooking the beautiful garden area in full bloom. Some vegetables were traded and given away to the ones who did not for whatever reason partake and it was really a positive thing to see.

Everyone is looking forward to getting those started again quite soon for the 2020 season and I am confident it will be just as big of a success as last year.



Photo taken from INFOnews

Late November the renovation started on the new windows for our units here at Blair Apartments. The windows are not only more energy efficient; they are aesthetically pleasing. The building is looking wonderful with all the improvements.



A special Christmas visit with the Women from Saint John's Lutheran Church.

The women came in with their arms full of treats, and their hearts full of joy. The time was spent singing Christmas carols, listening to A Christmas Story being read aloud.

Afterwards, it was wonderful to see how everyone was engaged, interacted, visited, talked, laughed and hugged during the visit. The Ladies also gave Blair Apartments a donation cheque towards the annual Christmas dinner.

The Ladies are always checking in seeing if there is anything the tenants or the community kitchen needs. Sometimes they just pop in with a bag of silverware or to-go containers.

Their kindness and generosity are greatly appreciated by all, these ladies truly care. We are honoured and blessed to know them.

On December 25, 2019, the morning started with tenants helping prep for dinner.

Once everything was cooked, we enjoyed a lovely turkey and ham with all the fixings this year. Twenty-six tenants attended. There was lots of laughter going and gratitude for the evening spent together.

The garden is almost ready to go we have a few last things to get prepared and we will be planting right around the May long weekend.

## More Highlights

We have a large community kitchen available for people to use 7 days a week. Late in 2019, some funding became available to us to be able to put on a small community meal for residents once a week.

This has been a huge success right from the beginning with people helping with prep and clean up and most importantly, eating the yummy dinners!

They are not extravagant by any means but the home-style cooking along with some imagination and ingenuity and the occasional food donation from a sister site has resulted in some very fine meals indeed.

Lasagna and Garlic bread, Jumbo loaded burrito's, Slow-cooked ribs and baked cheese pasta with bolognese sauce, Chicken thighs/drumsticks with pierogis, sour cream, fried onions and bacon.

The smells alone permeating from the kitchen on these days is enough to bring even the biggest homebody out to see what is cooking.

Meals are often enjoyed among upwards of 10-15 people at a time in the kitchen. Often we feed 20-25 people with any leftovers to be enjoyed the following day.

People laughing and visiting amongst one another while enjoying a nice home-cooked meal has been a real pleasure to see and be a part of.

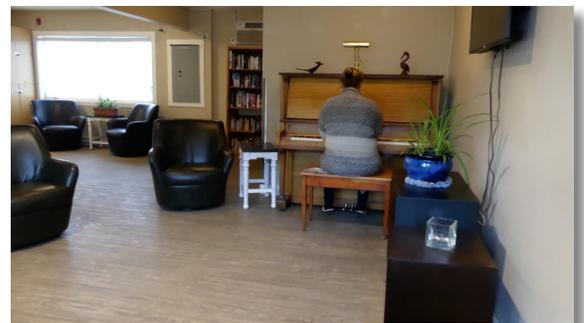
The longer this has gone on, the more relationships have been built between residents. They are extremely grateful we have been able to put this together for them and are always willing to help out and be a part of.

New furniture for the common area it now has four new swivel chairs, a new sectional couch, TV and a fireplace. The tenants have expressed their gratitude for the new furniture.

**Piano!** Huge shout out to Deborah McCann who found a free piano for our common area, she has donated her time by tuning and maintaining the piano.

Hugo's moving company helped make this possible by lowering the cost of delivery.

Below are some images of Blair Apartments kitchen and of a resident playing the donated piano.



“Everyone at Blair apartments is so welcome. Like old home week. I couldn't help but notice how everyone was engaged, interacted, visited, talked, laughed and hugged. Christmas was in the air.” —

Irene Hirschmiller, Saint John's Lutheran Church on Christmas at Blair Apartments.

## SHELTER SERVICES

### Our Place



Our Place is an emergency shelter where any homeless person over the age of 19 is eligible to enter. While staying at the shelter, residents can access life skills training, employment programs, counselling, harm reduction supplies, an overdose prevention space, 12-step groups, health and legal services through a community network.

Our Place Shelter is funded by BC Housing to provide emergency shelter in the Vernon area for those who are absolute homeless, who may be suffering from economic downturn, addictions and/or mental health challenges. The Our Place Shelter has the capacity for 46 residents.

### Apr. 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights

The landscaping of the new shelter was completed mid-summer which included a dog run. Our Place was Vernon's first pet-friendly shelter. We saw a reduction in overdoses this past year due to our Overdose Prevention Program and the expansion of our Peer Program. A number of clients transitioned to My Place-supportive housing, Blair Apartments-affordable housing and onto independence. We formed a close partnership with the Medicine Shoppe Pharmacy. They come to the site to provide Opioid Agonist Therapy directly from the shelter. This partnership has contributed to a reduction in the reliance of street drugs and a reduction in overdoses. In working closely with our outreach teams the shelter was able to increase one on one supports which includes assistance with obtaining ID and attending medical appointments.



### 2020/2021 Outlook:

By the beginning of 2020 Canada was in the midst of preparing for the COVID-19 pandemic. A health emergency had been declared and Our Place was focused on social distancing and sanitization. 2020/21 will be a year of balancing the supports our clients need during two simultaneous health emergency's that call for the opposite response. The opioid health emergency which calls for discouraging isolation to reduce the number of overdose deaths while the COVID-19 emergency calls for social distancing and self isolation. We will continue working closely with clients to implement individualized case plans to best support them in 2020/21.

## Gateway



The Gateway Shelter is funded by BC Housing to provide emergency shelter in the Vernon area for those who are absolutely homeless and/or who may be suffering from economic downturn, addictions and/or mental health challenges.

While staying at the shelter, residents can access life skills training, employment programs, counselling, harm reduction supplies, 12-step groups, health and legal services through a community network.

### **Apr. 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights**

In the spring of 2019 the Gateway shelter moved into a new site next door. This allowed for an increase of shelter beds from 25 to 40. The need was clearly identified through the number of houseless people turned away due to a lack of bed space. Evidence of the need was also demonstrated by the bi-annual homeless census conducted every spring and fall. Staff at Gateway were able to provide space to an additional fifteen people who would have otherwise been sleeping outside once the Temporary Winter Shelter closed.

This past year our new Cammy LeFleur Clinic Nurse and Social Worker took an active role supporting clients with medical needs by reducing blood borne infections through education and harm reduction practices.

### **2020/2021 Outlook:**

The staff and clients will continue their commitment to being good neighbours in our downtown community. Clients often can be found sweeping and shovelling sidewalks on our block and staff work around the clock to monitor the safety and cleanliness surrounding the shelter and neighbouring businesses.

In March of 2020 the shelter began preparing for the COVID-19 health emergency by moving food services into the Temporary Winter Shelter site next door. This was done in order to rearrange bed spacing to increase distancing. Physical barriers were installed between beds and additional hand washing stations were brought in.

Moving into the 2020/21 fiscal year Gateway staff will be focused on educating shelter participants in necessary washing, sanitizing and coughing practices as well as the need to social distance. Staff will continue supporting clients with substance misuse throughout the concurrent opioid health emergency by providing overdose prevention programs and referrals to opioid agonist therapy, out patient treatment and residential addiction treatment programs.

## Temporary Winter Shelter



The program typically operates between November 1st and March 31st.

When the Gateway and Our Place Shelters are full during the winter season, BC Housing will fund Temporary Winter Shelter programs to provide essential life saving measures in Vernon.

### Apr. 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights

Shelter beds are regularly filled, and those who are houseless are turned away to sleep outside almost every night. Though people are able to live outside most of the year in Vernon, this is not an option throughout the bitterly cold winter months. The Temporary Winter Shelter Program added overflow bed-space to the Gateway and Our Place year-round emergency shelters.

As March 2020 approached shelter and housing outreach staff were able to transition clients into housing and available year-round shelter beds. When the shelter closed this year every client had a warm place to move into. This would not have been possible if not for the close collaboration between all departments at Turning Points.



## OUTREACH SERVICES

### Homeless Outreach Program



Kelly Denis the Homeless Outreach Program Coordinator.

A couple of the highlights for the Homeless Outreach Program this last year was the opening up of My Place, Supportive Housing. With My Place opening, it helped get a number of the people out of the shelters and off the streets into a place of their own. We are starting to see the tenants, growing, making changes in their lives and most are very happy with their home.

I was also able to assist a number of our clientele in getting glasses and dentures. One client had not had teeth for 18 years so cried when presented with the opportunity. Another client had needed glasses for 8 years and did not have the funds to get them and her eyes were starting to be affected. To see them so happy, appreciated and the challenge is we still have a number of people, who are struggling financially, mentally and with addiction concerns and cannot find a safe affordable place to live. Some are active in looking for a place but are not being called back, which is heart-breaking for them.

For the upcoming year, my goal is to continue to meet with the vulnerable population, complete VATs for supported housing and so assist them in getting connected to services.

### Homeless Prevention Program & Housing Program



Eric Denison is the Homeless Prevention Program Coordinator.

2019 has been both a challenging and rewarding year for the Homeless Prevention and Housing Outreach Programs.

Turning Points through both BC Housing programs was able to help over 200 individuals to obtain and maintain their housing. We have also been able to facilitate housing for a number of people by helping them with subsidized housing applications and assistance in meeting with landlords.

There have been challenges with having to turn away individuals and families because of lack of funds and there have been more requests for assistance from working people unable to afford rent in the North Okanagan. Unfortunately, minimum wage does not enable anyone to find suitable, affordable rental accommodation in our community.

On the bright side, the addition of My Place, 52 units this year, has meant that there many homeless people now in subsidized, secure and affordable housing.

## PEER SERVICES

### Client Care Coordinator



This program provides mental health assessments, substance use assessments, advocacy with many different community agencies and many other services to clients. We have a coordinator Betty Keding providing services two days a week and a full-time support worker, Melissa Brown who continues to support clients in all our sites.

This program was put into place by Turning Points Collaborative Society recognizing that there was a need for counselling, support and advocacy for

both staff and clients.

Turning Points has recognized that many of our clients get “stuck” without consistent and ongoing supports. Clients, many times, forget or are unable to access services due to both internal and external barriers. This has been as varied as helping to fill out disability forms, advocating with the Ministry of Children and Families, helping clients to connect with probation, immigrant services, Salvation Army, Gleaners, Legal Aid, detox, substance use treatment services and Interior Health.

We also have had the privilege of advocating and succeeding for several clients to get into a higher level of care within the Health Care system.

Some of the highlights this year have been that we have seen clients who have been homeless, have helped them to access mental health services, and housing and now that seen them become peers and help others.

### VEPAD (Vernon Entrenched People Against Discrimination)



VEPAD (Vernon Entrenched People Against Discrimination) is a group of marginalized people living within Vernon: some are homeless, some use illicit substances, and most of us are poor.

Should contentious issues arise in our community, we hope that we can join with our allies and stand against hatred or at minimum communicate and network so that we know we are not alone.

We see you! We appreciate you! And, we hope to work with you for a more tolerant and just society. It is our hope with this group to create a safe space for peers and also to reach out and connect with allies in our community.

## Cammy LaFleur Street Outreach Program



The Cammy LaFleur Outreach Program is tailored to improve people's health and prevent the transmission of blood-borne pathogens, decrease or prevent infections, and support people at risk of or who have blood-borne pathogens and/or infections.

A multitude of tasks fall within that mandate to assist people in becoming stable, safer, healthier, heard and supported.

The team provides outreach to homeless camps, in-reach to shelter sites, wound care, some health care, health navigation, case management, advocacy, and referrals.

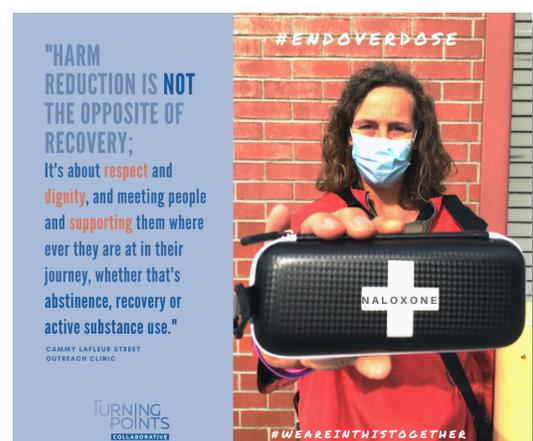
Our fixed-site is open 1 p.m.-3 p.m. Monday to Friday where we distribute harm reduction supplies, some clothing and hygiene products. We collaborate closely with the HIV outreach nurse, the OAT nurse, Interior Health MHSU (Mental Health and Substance Use), MSDPR (Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction) and other community organizations to assist service users.

An essential component of our program is stigma reduction, community education, and peer empowerment. We support a variety of pre-employment programs for service users as well as a grassroots peer group called VEPAD (Vernon Entrenched People Against Discrimination).

Our community education component includes sessions on stigma, substance use disorders, criminalization of people with substance use disorders, harm reduction, poverty reduction, and human rights.

### July 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights

- Our clinic services have been accessed 4919 times
- January 2020-present: 48 incidents of wound care and hospital visit prevention, 30 nurse care files opened, and 9 health navigation and advocacy events
- 30,036 syringes returned for disposal
- Peer co-facilitated workshops on substance use disorders, stigma and harm reduction to local community service providers. In particular, the feedback from participants highlighting their changed perceptions and emphasizing the sessions by peers as the most influential.



Cont. on next page

- Obtainment of two Community Action Team grants to fund a 7-week peer empowerment program, as well as, numerous peer paid outreach projects including two indigenous peer navigator positions
- Obtainment of a Compassion, Inclusion and Engagement plus an Interior Health Authority grant to supplement the continued operation of Vernon's Peer group.
- The continued city funding of peer-paid community clean up. With the COVID pandemic, this program has been moved to residents at My Place. Three peers guide the program on a weekly basis and other residents sign up to participate. Clean-up includes the downtown core, Polson Park, Justice park, Becker Park and '*hot spots*' in the outlying areas. Participants report consistent positive interactions with the public and often they are approached and thanked for their work.
- Attending the Rural and Indigenous Action Exchange conference in Kamloops with 4 local Indigenous peers (brainstorming with peers and allies plus the plush hotel was a real treat!), in conjunction with VEPAD (see below) hosting the BCCDC and First Nation's Health Authority's Compassion, Inclusion, and Engagement workshop on Cultural knowledge and safety, collaborating with the BC Coalition for Poverty Reduction on various projects, participating in an IH harm reduction client study, and collaborating with Kamloops' Ask Wellness program to provide a spectrometer for service users to test their drugs.
- The expertise, knowledge and skills our two clinic peer assistants bring to our program. These two have changed our work for the better, not only are they so much fun to be around but they have taught us so much
- We saved the best for last as we are very proud of the grassroots peer group called 'Vernon Entrenched People Against Discrimination (VEPAD). Membership for this group has grown exponentially as has its notoriety. The group has hosted educational sessions for peers with bylaw, Pivot Legal Society, and the Compassion, Inclusion and Engagement initiative. They sit on the Harm Reduction Action Team (HART), as well as, provide feedback on issues unique to marginalized and impoverished populations to a variety of stakeholders in this community. The group has also conducted interviews with Global News, Castanet, and the Morning Star. Recently VEPAD had an election and now has 5 elected peer mentors and 2 administrative clerks.

## Challenges

The continued hardship and mistreatment our service users experience related to stigma-fuelled policies, laws, and public perceptions has been a real challenge for our team.

Increasing understanding on stigma, substance use disorders, institutional racism, and poverty rooted in our economic system is an endless task.

To work with people impacted by Canada's colonial and economic system and navigate layers of oppression and discrimination can be daunting.

We ground our work in evidence-based research, and issues such as substance use disorders, which are classified in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, continue to be treated as an immoral lifestyle choice.

Cont. on next page

We try to get the message out there (like right now) that telling somebody with a substance use disorder to make different choices is akin to telling somebody with schizophrenia to stop having auditory hallucinations.

We do feel hopeful though, as incremental changes in policies and perceptions are hopefully a foretelling of countrywide transformation.

### Outlook 2020/2021



How our program will contribute to our board's strategic plan:

#### **'Developing a Housing Strategy'**

In line with TPCS's housing strategy, housing is a health issue. People who are housed can better address other issues in their lives. Working collaboratively with the other programs in TPCS to help people get and keep housing is integral to our mandate.

#### **'Expanding Community Education and Awareness'.**

We are very excited to continue aligning our work with this strategic plan. We have developed workshops on substance use disorders, stigma, the cycle of harms from criminalization, and human rights which we will be presenting to peers this coming year. As well, we are working on

**'Trauma-informed care'** sessions and various workshops on personality disorders, substance use disorders, and harm reduction to present to community organizations working with vulnerable populations. We plan to co-facilitate with people with lived experience and hope to elicit empathy, increased understanding, and compassion from our participants.

#### **'Diversify our funding to better support the people we serve and our community as a whole.'**

Our grants from the 'Compassion, Engagement, and Inclusion' initiative, the Overdose Response Community Action Team, Vernon City, and grants from the Interior Health Authority have funded people within our target population to do work that increases wellbeing for themselves, their peers and the community as a whole. Supporting and funding the causes and passions of the people we serve has made exponential improvements in their lives. Our intention is to continue applying for grants that directly benefit the people we serve and as a result, benefit the greater community.

Providing a safe, welcoming space and having people who do not engage in any services come into our clinic to relax and put their feet up, are some of our biggest

wins. — Alison Houweling, Cammy LaFleur Outreach Program, Turning Points Collaborative Society

## ADDICTION AND RECOVERY SERVICES

Turning Points Collaborative Society continues to provide effective services for both those struggling with addiction, and families affected by loved ones struggling in addiction. Addiction services within Turning Points Collaborative continue to offer a therapeutic environment in which both men and women can be a part of a recovery community, focusing on their emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual well-being.

### Bill's Place and Haven Place



Bill's Place, a 19 bed, abstinence-based Addiction Recovery Program, became a reality in March of 2013. It is a 10 – 12 week intensive residential treatment program, followed by a 10 – 12 week extended care program. These are designed for men and women who wish to stop the cycle of substance misuse in their life.

The program is comprised of various components including: 1) Didactic lectures, focusing on topics such as relapse prevention, healthy communication, emotional fluency, healthy relationships, and goal setting. 2) 12 Step meetings and Group Therapy. 3) Physical activities including exercise in the gym, or walking around our beautiful setting. 4) Each client completes a treatment plan and an aftercare plan, which helps aid them in creating a life free of substance misuse.

Since opening our doors in 2013, we have had 278 men and women come into our program. We continue to see amazing things and life-changes happen. We continue to see men and women complete our program, where they are encouraged to meet with WorkBC and look at either employment or going back to school.

#### Haven Place

Haven Place, Sober Living Program provides an affordable supportive housing program for men and women.

Located next to Bill's Place, Haven Place, Sober Living Program provides an affordable supportive housing program for men and women. The sober living complex is available to men and women who are graduates of our addictions recovery programming and seeking stable, interim housing.

Residents are required to develop a case plan with staff and are supported to achieve their goals. Residents can access all services and programs delivered through TPCS Referrals and assistance to community resources and programs is provided.

Continues on next page.

Without our leadership team of Filomena Alves, Steve Braun, Ian Malcolm, Robert Ricard, Brian Payne, Ivan Clarke, Brent Romanack, and Tony Butschler, there is no way we would be able to do what we do as effectively.

### Apr. 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights

Some highlights from this past year are:

We had 11 Bill's Place Alumni celebrate 6 years clean and sober

- Continuing to effectively work with Interior Health.
- We continue to receive per diem funding for anyone on Assistance.
- Since October of 2017 when we became a co-ed facility, we've now seen 36 women come into our program.
- Haven Place, the site used for our Second stage residents, continues to be almost always fully occupied.

Referrals from Vernon Jubilee Hospital, Interior Health and Downtown Primary Care, Corrections, Shelters, Detox facilities, other treatment centres throughout BC, as well as referrals from potential clients themselves, continue to pour in each week.

At Bill's Place and Haven Place, we continue to receive a tremendous amount of support from local community partners. Trinity United Church - Christmas gifts, donations, treatment fees; Therapeutic counselling, Christmas stockings, and many practical needs like dental and eye care, were paid for by Vernon Alliance Church; There is absolutely no way we would be in a position to do what we do with help and support coming from our community partners. A huge 'Thank You' goes out to them.



“My role with Turning Points, is one that I never have to question why do I do what I do. I have so much gratitude for being able to see broken people restored, sick people get well, and people feeling hopeless regain their self-worth. I’m privileged to be a part of an amazing leadership team, with a shared passion for walking alongside others on this road of Recovery at every level.” — Brad Houghton, Manager of Addiction’s Services,

Turning Points Collaborative Society

## EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

### WorkBC



WorkBC is a provincially funded program subcontracted through Community Futures that offers support to clients to become employment ready. Turning Points accommodates clients with multiple barriers including homelessness, addiction and substance use, mental health challenges, and disabilities.

WorkBC provides a wide range of services including exploring career options, job search resources, workshops, short-term certificates, skills training, education, financial assistance, skill upgrading, short term certificates, work clothing, tools and transportation just to name a few.

#### Apr. 1/19 - Mar. 31/20 Highlights



- Eight participants who found and maintained full and part-time employment.
- Two participants who are actively participating in Occupational Skills Training.
- Two participants who completed 52 weeks of employment.

A new addition to the WorkBC program is Malmie Gunawardena. Rachel Tessier and Malmie are a great team who draw on each other's knowledge and expertise. Together, they are excited to work with future WorkBC clientele to assist them in becoming better prepared for employment and to help them with their job search activities.

#### 2020/2021 Outlook:

WorkBC will continue to contribute to the Board's Strategic Plan by developing collaborations with external stakeholders and expanding community awareness about employment services among multi-barrier clientele. The WorkBC program is looking forward to progressing into Customized Employment, Job Development, Community Attachments, and Unpaid Work Experiences in the future.

“Our goal is to help all British Columbians successfully navigate B.C.’s labour market” — WorkBC

## COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

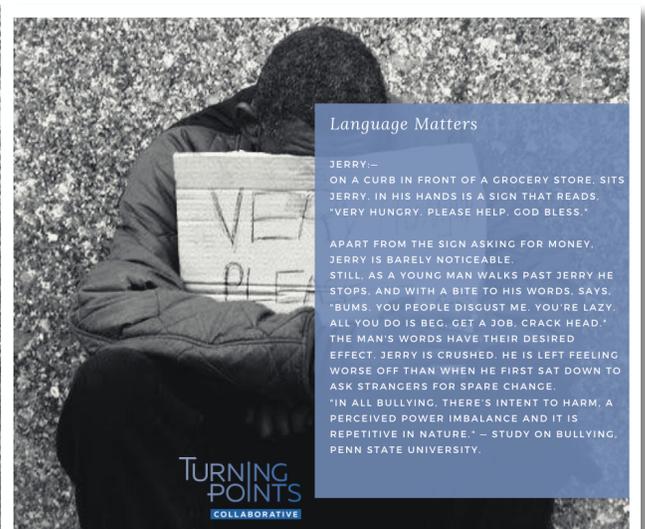
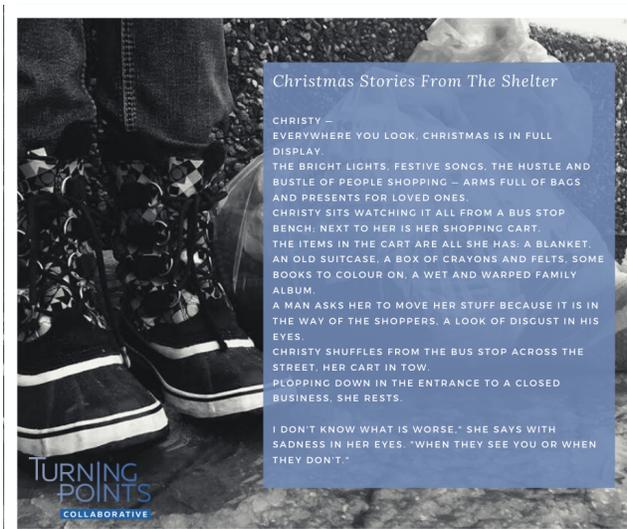


At the end of 2019, Turning Points Collaborative Society added the position of Director of Public Relations to its leadership team. The role aligns with the board of director's 2017-2020 Strategic Plan, in that it will help provide enhanced education and awareness of the Turning Points' services and programs.

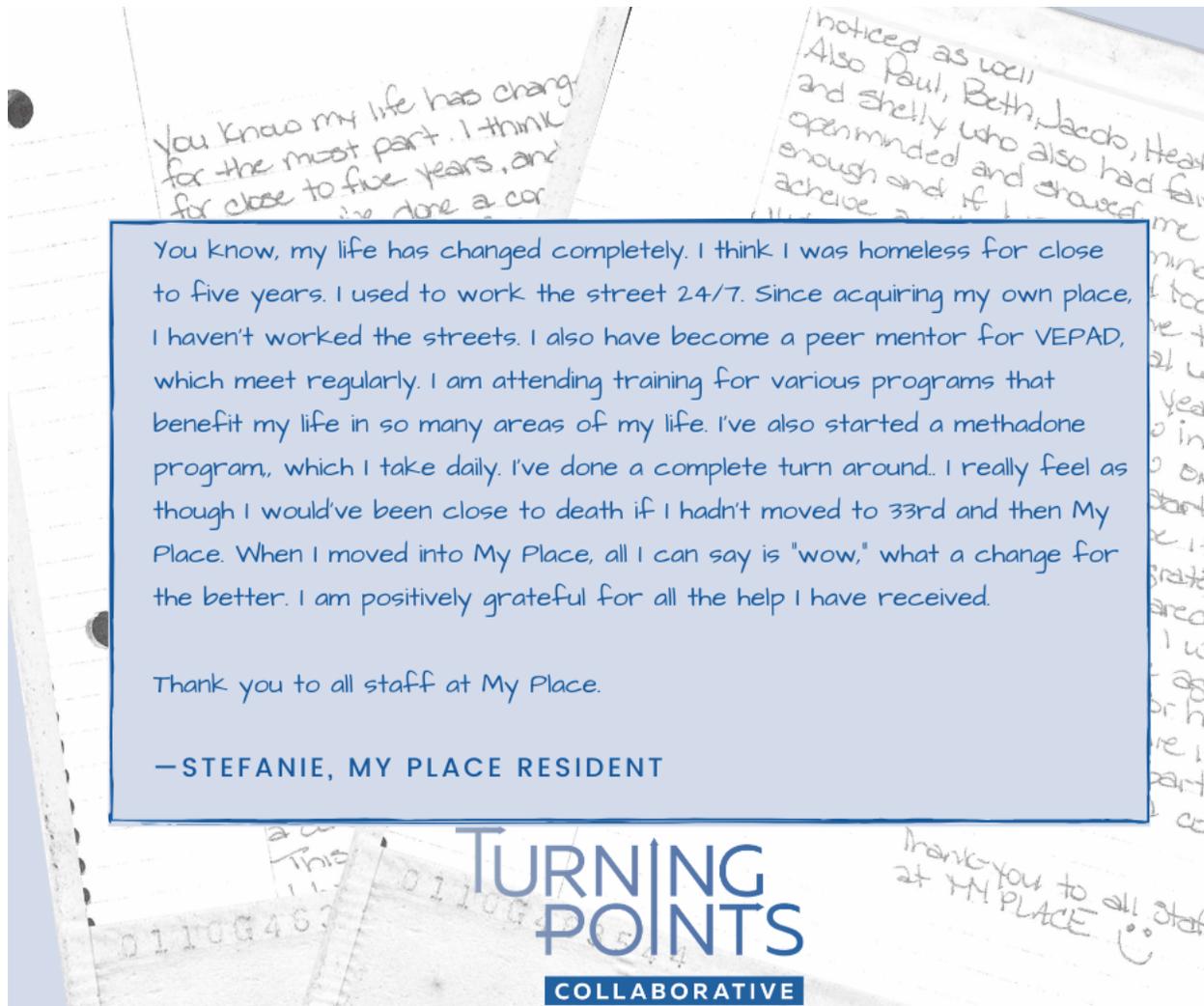
Journalist and former Upper Room Mission community liaison, Josh Winquist, was brought on to fill the role. Within the first few weeks of joining Turning Points, Josh was able to increase and improve Turning Point's social media presence and reach in the community.

Through social media campaign like, *Christmas Stories From The Shelter*, and *Language Matters*, Josh has been able to shine a light on the realities for some of the Turning Points clients and bring awareness of these struggles to the greater community.

In addition to providing enhanced communications and education for Turning Points, Josh has also acted as an ambassador for the organization, joining the Greater Chamber of Commerce Advocacy Committee, and the Downtown Vernon Association.



## TESTIMONIALS



You know, my life has changed completely. I think I was homeless for close to five years. I used to work the street 24/7. Since acquiring my own place, I haven't worked the streets. I also have become a peer mentor for VEPAD, which meet regularly. I am attending training for various programs that benefit my life in so many areas of my life. I've also started a methadone program, which I take daily. I've done a complete turn around. I really feel as though I would've been close to death if I hadn't moved to 33rd and then My Place. When I moved into My Place, all I can say is "wow," what a change for the better. I am positively grateful for all the help I have received.

Thank you to all staff at My Place.

—STEFANIE, MY PLACE RESIDENT

## My Place

I found self-worth,  
which I never saw  
in myself before. —

Stef, *My Place* resident.

You know my life has changed completely for the most part. I think I was homeless for close to five years, and since 33rd shelter opened up I've done a complete turnaround.

I really feel as though I would've been close to death if I hadn't moved to 33rd. When I moved into My Place, all I can say is 'wow,' what a change for the better. I am positively grateful for all the help I have received. I used to work the street 24/7. Since acquiring my own place, I haven't worked the streets. I also have become a peer mentor for VEPAD, which meets regularly.

I am attending training for various programs that benefit my life in so many areas of my life. I've also started a methadone program, which I take daily. I make all my appointments and I am working with the A-team.

Monday, February 10, 2020 I had surgery to fix my jaw, which has been constant stress and pain for the past 2 years. This time circumstances are very different.

I have a huge support team backing me and a stable home to recover at. Without any of these, I know I wouldn't be moving forward with my life in such a positive way. I wouldn't be doing any of the positive things, if I wasn't here.

I am very comfortable here and feel positive about my future. I never thought I could make such a positive way. I feel positive about my future. I never thought I could make such a positive turn in my life.

I am open to any further changes which are only positive, with less resistance on my part as well.

Thanks to the staff members such as Richard who stuck beside me and showed me all the positive choices that others noticed as well.

Also Pail, Beth, Jacob, Heather, Chantelle and Shelley, who also had faith in me staying open-minded and showed me I was strong enough and if I put my mind to it, I could achieve anything I wanted to, without judgement, which allowed me to be myself and let me see the potential which I couldn't see in myself for so many years.

I found self-worth, which I never saw in myself before. Also letting me know, ONE STEP at a time and it would all start to fall into place, which would not be if it wasn't for all of them. I am grateful for everyone who showed me they cared and for not giving up on me when I wanted to give up on myself. So once again, I can never thank you enough for helping me to become the person Stefanie is today.

I hope that they are all part of the positive person I am gonna continue to strive for.

Thank you to all staff at My Place.

## Blair Apartments

Blair Apartments  
has given me a  
second chance.

— Barbara , Blair Apartments,  
resident

I thought I'd give a little background on myself, and how I came to live at Blair Apartments.

I was at an extremely low point in my life. It was in October 2016. On October 16, 2016, I was pulled over by the RCMP. Someone had called me in. I had been weaving in and out of traffic, dangerously so.

I am an alcoholic and made a very, very poor decision to drink and drive. I was charged and convicted of driving under the influence, under the criminal code. A criminal record for life. My car was impounded and subsequently towed to an impoundment yard. I lost

my driver's license for one year, followed by a two-year term of having a breathalyzer installed in my car. I was on probation for one year as well. I had to see him on a weekly basis.

Being without a license, and living outside of Armstrong, up above O'Keefe Ranch, it was about a three and a half hour to walk to Vernon. I ended up doing a lot of hitchhiking.

In the spring of 2017, I was hitchhiking to Vernon on a regular basis. I had to find a place in town. One day I hitchhiked into town, with the mindset of finding a place to live. I was checking hotel/motel rates, and I was starting to realize that Vernon did not have a lot of rentals available.

While checking motels, I came across "Blair Apartments". I stopped there and put in an application. I spoke to Shelley, the property manager, who told me that she would keep in touch with me, in the event that a unit became available. I think I called her twice a week, for approximately three months.

In May 2017, I got the call. A room had become available. The room was lovely. It had all of the necessities. A bed, table and chairs, two lamps, microwave, and fridge. They also provided a hot plate. There was a common kitchen area as well, with two stoves, and two fridges. There was a tv area complete with couches and chairs, and a community garden.

One day I told Candace, the full-time resident worker, that I thought it would be really neat if we could get a piano for the common area. Unbeknownst to me, she found someone who donated a piano to us.

As a professional pianist, it has provided me with an excellent way of reducing stress. To play the piano, after a difficult day, has been very therapeutic for me.

Different churches are involved with Blair Apartments. They stop by at Christmas time, and we enjoy an afternoon of singing Christmas carols and getting to know each other. And one of the nicest things that I have found with the different organizations that support Blair, is that they are non-judgemental and no matter what situation someone is in, they do not judge, ever.

Blair Apartments has given me a second chance. There are some residential workers who are here full time, ready to provide emotional support, something that I have needed for a very long time.

Thank you, Shelley, Candace and Tim, for all of your support. It is a rare thing to have a place such as Blair Apartments, to give people a chance at a good, clean, sober, happy life.

## Peer Services

“This program has, helped me to come out of my shell and my depression.” —

KO, Turning Points Collaborative Society/  
Peer Services client

### Client, KO:

This program has helped me to come out of my shell and my depression. The counselling is available whenever I need it. You ladies have given me moral support and the peer group has helped me big time.

Both you (Mellissa Brown) and Betty (Keding) are awesome to talk to about problems one on one. Melissa your advice helped me last week. The work that you did to help me with food-safe and referral forms was awesome.

Turning Points has helped me to get housing, and a car and a part-time job. I have been clean and sober for twenty months and now help others to get to 12 step meetings. This has been a direct result of the help and support that this program provides. I can phone and make an appointment and you guys will be right there for my support. I really appreciate that.

I have learned to trust and to ask for help when I need it.

— JP, Turning Points Collaborative Society/  
Peer Services client.

### Client, JP:

This program has done a lot for me. It has opened me up so that I can do things with people. It has helped me to come out of my shell and to work as a peer mentor.

I have been opened up with my communication. I have learned to trust and to ask for help when I need it.

Betty (Keding) has helped to build my confidence and trust and self-worth.

The supports have opened doors to expand. I have conquered some fears. The supports have never stopped and they are above and beyond.

## Turning Points Collaborative Society

“From the moment I met the Turning Points Collaborative team it was nothing but amazing help.”

— Michael, Turning Points Collaborative Society/WorkBC client

I initially walked through the doors of Turning Points Collaborative to meet with my social worker because I had applied for income assistance. Just finishing rehab and now clean for two years I was not sure what was next, but I did have a plan in mind.

From the moment I met the Turning Points Collaborative team it was nothing but amazing help from the beginning.

Some initial planning, set me up for an ongoing maintenance program for substance abuse at Vernon Mental Health to continue learning new tools.

They helped me get into a business management program through Community Futures and just always being there when I had questions throughout the process.

Finding out over time that Turning Points Collaborative did a lot more than social work for Income Assistance as there's help for all aspects of the community.

I thank the whole Turning Points Collaborative Society team for helping me to reach the successes that I have so far and to reach for the Sky in the future.

I know they'll always be there helping because this is what they do. Thank you from the bottom of my Heart.



## THANK YOUs



The success Turning Points Collaborative Society had this year in supporting our community would not have been possible without the collaboration and partnerships with the following people and organizations:

**BC Housing** worked with the Society to ensure year-round emergency shelter spaces were increased by fifteen. They invested in our community by providing My Place, a 52-unit supportive housing apartment which opened the summer of 2019. *BC Housing funds the following programs: My Place, Our Place, Gateway, Blair Apartments, Homeless Outreach,*

*Homeless Prevention, and the Temporary Winter Shelters.*

**Interior Health** entrusted their blood-borne pathogen/harm reduction program with the society until such time as they could release a Request for proposals. *Interior Health funds the following programs: Supported Recovery Housing at Bill's Place, Peer Program and the blood-borne pathogen/harm reduction program (Cammy LaFleur)*

**Community Futures** continues to work closely with the society to ensure employment supports are available to all. *Community Futures is funded by the Province of BC and contracts WorkBC Employment Services to the Society.*

**Lutheran Ladies Group, Trinity United Church, SilverStar Mountain Resort, Vernon Upper Room Mission, City of Vernon, Canadian Tire, Flower Spot Nursery, Lake City Casino,**

### Blair Peden retires from the TPCS



In April of 2020, after 44 years of service, Blair Peden retired from the board of directors with Turning Points Collaborative Society—a term that began in 1976 with the then John Howard Society.

For more than four decades, Blair has been at the forefront of social work in Vernon, both as a probation officer and as a member of the board of directors, even acting as board chair on multiple occasions.

Blair helped guide the Society through periods of great change over the years but says the time is now right to for him step aside.

The future of the Society "is in good hands," he says.

Continues on next page.

In recognition of his long-time involvement and dedication to those less fortunate in the community, in 2016, the Society named its 39-unit affordable rental housing property after him—known now in the community as Blair Apartments.

Upon his retirement, another long-time board member, Cheryl Schmidt stated that Blair's absolute and focused commitment to the organization, and to the people it serves, was, and still is, his defining quality.

"His life as a parole officer didn't make him cynical, it just made him more aware of the challenges people face in life and how much support they often need to get themselves back on track. And he was determined that John Howard Society be part of providing that support," wrote Schmidt. "Blair was there when the organization was on the point of collapse and was one of the ones that worked hard and never gave up on the vision of providing safe and supportive housing for a population in dire need. I will really miss his common-sense approach, his easy laugh, and the history and perspective he brought."

For Blair it is simple, the key to creating a safer community comes down to how the community takes care of its less fortunate citizens.

This philosophy has been the guiding force behind his actions for more than four decades.

Blair, along with countless others from the community, has helped build a social support structure in Vernon unlike that of any other community. As he puts it, "It is all these small non-profits that provide the safety net that has served this community so well."

However, Peden believes that we are in danger of losing that safety net and is urging those in the community who can help support the small non-profits to do so as much as they can.

"A lot of these non-profits just can't survive on their own and they are not going to get government funding," he warns. "They all contribute to the quality of life that we enjoy in this community and the reasons we enjoy living here so much. It is all about caring for those less fortunate and making our community a safer place. And whatever you have to do to make that happen, you do."

We need to do even more and a lot of it is financial. We need to keep these important small non-profits alive. It is all about caring for those less fortunate and making our community a safer place."

Peden remains active in the community sitting both as a member of the BX Community Association and as an alternate director for Area B with the Regional District of the North Okanagan.

"Blair was there when the organization was on the point of collapse and was one of the ones that worked hard and never gave up on the vision of providing safe and supportive housing for a population in dire need." —

Cheryl Schmidt, long-time TPCS board member.