



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

This year was to have been a year of celebration for our Society and we had the event plans and pre-purchased swag to prove it. And then COVID hit. It was still a milestone year however. October 26th of 2020 was Charlford House Society's 50th Anniversary!

It has been an unusual year – a year of challenge vs opportunity – isolation vs connection – anxiety vs peace, change vs sameness – and we continue to forge a path, designed to enable health and healing within the four walls of our “little house of miracles”.

Now that Charlford House has surpassed 50 years of life-saving service to the community, successfully navigated a year and a half of COVID without a single positive case and we continue to run at or near capacity in all three of our programs, we are humbled by the many women who entrust themselves to our care each and every day.

May our strength and inspiration always lie in those who came before us as much as those who came after us.

FOREVER HOME

Although COVID-19 put our Forever Home plans on hold, this year was not without progress.

In February, Charlford House's staff and Board participated in a Strategic Planning Session with facilitator and professional fundraiser Grant Monck.

We secured a \$50,000 donation from the Krogseth Foundation towards hiring a Donor Development Officer, who will lead the Forever Home capital campaign. We are currently in the interview process for this position to find someone with the fundraising experience necessary to reach our Forever Home goal of \$6 million.

Our aim is to move out of the current property we've been renting for the past 48 years and ideally, move into an ownership position. We will increase the capacity from 15 to 24 beds, operate from a disabled-friendly, energy efficient home, have ample office and program space and an outdoor gardening area.

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD



A little over 18 months ago, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. On April 1, 2020, we of Charlford House entered our 50th anniversary year, and instead of a year of celebration, we entered a year of confusion and uncertainty. Our focus moved from celebration to keeping our residents, volunteers and staff safe while continuing to provide the much-needed addiction treatment programming.

Looking back, I can say that we were all scared. We had no idea how we were going to continue to meet the needs of our residents and alumnae when we all had to stay apart. We worried that without full beds and fundraising events we would have financial problems. But, out of all the uncertainty shone the strength of Charlford House. But, now, looking back, I think that our 2020-2021 fiscal year represented a fine 50th anniversary – we may not have partied, but we showed what Charlford is all about. I'm delighted to report, one year later and 18 months into the pandemic, that the Charlford strength continues to shine, and I believe that the Charlford program is stronger than ever. Among other notable achievements:

- There hasn't been a single case of COVID in either of the houses – everyone has remained safe. This is a remarkable achievement.
- With the true spirit of caring for each other, all the staff and volunteers of Charlford have been fully vaccinated, and all the residents, if not fully vaccinated, and partway there, and on the path.
- Our finances are sound. We may not have been able to have fundraising events, but thanks to our creative staff and board, we received a number of significant grants and donations were strong. And, we have increased our much needed and much-loved monthly donors.
- Donors have contributed electronics and other gifts-in-kind that have enabled us to take many of our programs online.
- Our program continues to thrive, and Charlford has received official kudos for the caring support provided by our talented and compassionate staff.





Times are still uncertain. As the 4th wave of COVID rolls around the globe we know that we have to remain vigilant about safety, and nimble to enable us to respond to whatever circumstance through our way. And, some of our plans for the future, like our Forever Home, have had to be delayed. But, after watching the way our team of staff and volunteers have managed over the past 18 months, I have great confidence that the spirit of Charlford will continue to shine. And, I know that sometime in the not-too-distant future, we will be able to get together to celebrate the miracle of Charlford's first 50 years and move confidently into the next 50.

So, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my deep admiration for and profound thanks to the whole Charlford team:

- Our talented, compassionate and resilient staff
- Our dedicated and caring volunteers
- Our wonderful donors, from foundations to the so-important monthly donors, and
- Our Board, who despite the disruption has wrought in their professional and personal lives, continue to make Charlford a priority.

Thank you all. I'm honoured and deeply grateful to work with you all.

- Nancy Matheson, Board President

A FEW WORDS FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND PROGRAM DIRECTOR



The word I keep coming back to when considering this past year at Charlford House is “blessed”. I think about the women sitting around the dining room table at lunch time, each taking turns announcing what they’re grateful for... Being forwarded an email with the subject line: Above and Beyond pertaining to how our staff helped a woman with no fixed address access the resources she so desperately needed... Hearing peals of laughter erupting from the offices just as readily as tears might flow... I think of timid hug requests followed up by bear-strong-never-let-you-go-embraces... bright smiles and happy chatter that greet me in the mornings and send me on my way each evening. I am blessed because every morning I leave home to “come home” and vice versa. I am blessed because I have the honour and privilege of witnessing the journey of transformation these women embark on by entering into Charlford House. This year showed us we can stay strong and healthy if we continue to do the right things alone and together. Physically. Mentally. Emotionally. What a blessing.

- Miranda Vecchio, Executive Director



The Program is going along well. We have several women in the program who have been personally affected by the found children in the First Nations community. Although we have not been able to participate in in-person spiritual practices (IE sweat lodge, healing circles), we have had discussion about the impact of residential schools on our lives and have incorporated wellbriety (12 steps for First Nations) into our program. We have also started an inclusive drumming circle for the women to share their songs with the non-indigenous women for healing of all women’s trauma, promoting growth and education.

Another year has gone by in the pandemic and as we muddle through the “new normal” we have found new ways of keeping the community of women strong by starting Relapse Prevention group with Stacie Yarrow via zoom. Zoom has been a gift to our recovery and connection because we are able to celebrate each other’s recovery, personal and professional milestones, and growth.

- Kaela McCann, Program Director

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CHARLFORD HOUSE STAFF



- 1. Miranda Vecchio**
Executive Director
- 2. Kaela McCann**
Program Director / Lead Counsellor
- 3. Stacie Yarrow**
Case Worker / Counsellor
- 4. Vivian Gietz**
Executive Assistant
- 5. Haley Roberts**
Junior Counsellor
- 6. Ariel Tait**
Residential Counsellor
- 7. Bryn-Erin Ward**
Fundraising and Events Assistant
- 8. Jessica Boatman**
Relief Worker

THE CHARLFORD HOUSE CONTINUUM OF CARE

TRANSITIONAL (SECOND STAGE) HOUSING

Charlford House offers transitional housing (eight beds) to women who have graduated from our minimum 90-day program.

Because many of our women are on a fixed low income and at risk of homelessness, we provide them with an affordable, supportive housing solution with an opportunity to further strengthen their foundation of recovery to gradually re-integrate into society. This provides stability and structure, while also enabling the women to explore volunteer and educational opportunities.

The women also benefit from taking responsibility for themselves by practicing cleanliness, healthy meal preparation (with produce from their own garden), and participating in a full range of activities, while maintaining a rigorous program of recovery from addiction.

SOBER LIVING

Charlford has four beds dedicated to sober living. These beds are for women who have completed the 12 step program; are practicing a rigorous program of recovery; and are seeking employment, gainfully employed, or exploring educational opportunities. While there are less rules and guidelines here than in transitional housing, there are still certain criteria to keep all persons living here safe.

LIFETIME AFTERCARE

Lifetime aftercare includes ongoing support, group and individual counselling, and community support. Many women consider Charlford House their spiritual home and are welcome to come back anytime.

Many Charlford alumnae return to volunteer, offering peer support to the new women in the program, while keeping themselves safe and connected.

CORE PROGRAMMING



12-Step Written Work



Mother's Access Program



Body Image Workshops



Music Therapy



Yoga and Meditation



Art Therapy



First Nations Integration



Food Safe Training



First Aid, CPR, and Naloxone Training

MUSIC THERAPY



I am an accredited music therapist who in another life was an award-winning singer songwriter who recorded and toured nationally and internationally. I graduated from Capilano's Bachelor of Music Therapy program in 2015 and Selkirk College's Professional Music and Technology Program in 2006. Currently I am completing a Masters of

Music Therapy through Concordia University's Creative Arts Therapies program. Over the past six years I have worked with bereaved families and individuals, people in addiction recovery, and parents looking to support children with behavioural and mental health challenges.

I began with Charlford House Society for Women as a practicum student in 2013. I am thrilled to be back covering Rebecca's maternity leave. When I walked through the doors I felt like I had come home and was reminded the power that this place has to change lives and am honoured to be part of it this year.

I work weekly with the women in groups and individually. The goals that we work toward include increasing a sense of connection with others and with self, feeling and processing emotions that have often been blocked through using and trauma, and increasing self awareness. We use group singing, songwriting, recovery playlists, relaxation and music, group improvisation and much more. Usually the music that we listen to, sing, or play gives us a starting ground for rich conversation where we explore strategies for recovery. Other times the music itself is where our greatest resilience is found.

Thank you to all the women here for including me in this amazing home.

- Aspen Switzer, Music Therapist



YOGA AND MEDITATION



Charlford House saved my life. I started using hard drugs at 13 years old. I ran away from a loving home, dropped out of school, all to live on the streets of Vancouver and be able to use drugs. I went through a lot over the many years drugs controlled my life. I've been evicted, lost jobs, hurt my family, the list goes on. I am now 34 years old and I just took my two years of sobriety on September 15th.

I have always had a passion for exercise, and when I discovered yoga it became a pivotal role in my recovery. When I started working at a yoga studio I quickly realized teaching yoga is what I wanted to do as a career. Never finishing high school I had a lot of fear around going to school. Would I actually finish? The tools I've learned help me conquer my fears. Now I have the pleasure of sharing my passion with people in recovery.

Teaching the women at Charlford is very rewarding. Sharing how yoga, meditation, body awareness and self love are important tools in recovery. When the women have a moment of peace in savasana, or hold strong in a pose it means everything. Yoga is a continuous journey to discover yourself and I hope I can help these women find the pieces they lost.

- Victoria Heard, Yoga Instructor

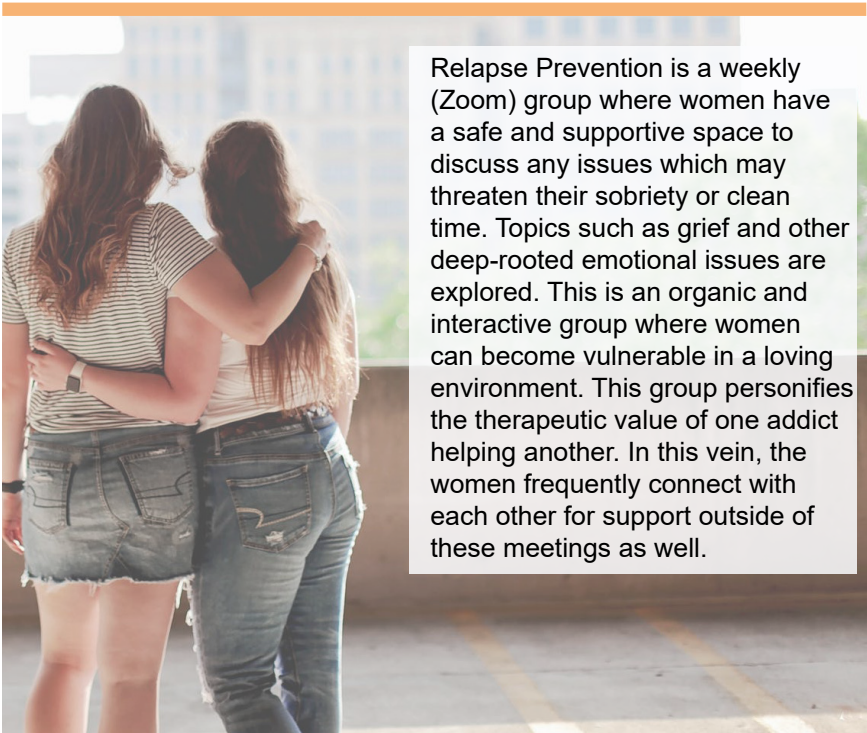


FAMILY GROUP

Charlford House's Family Group offers ongoing weekly support to family members of the women of Charlford House, both past and present. This group provides members with much needed insight, education, resource information and camaraderie. Recently, we began offering this service via Zoom due to COVID-19. The online format has allowed us to connect with family members from out of town who would not otherwise have access to Family Group.

Our Family Group follows the same philosophy that we do for our main program: women supporting women, people supporting each other. Family members are always welcome to attend, even if the woman relapses. The positive outcomes are reflected in feelings of hope and solidarity with other family members in the group. They are reminded that they are never alone.

RELAPSE PREVENTION GROUP



Relapse Prevention is a weekly (Zoom) group where women have a safe and supportive space to discuss any issues which may threaten their sobriety or clean time. Topics such as grief and other deep-rooted emotional issues are explored. This is an organic and interactive group where women can become vulnerable in a loving environment. This group personifies the therapeutic value of one addict helping another. In this vein, the women frequently connect with each other for support outside of these meetings as well.

FIRST NATIONS INTEGRATION

Charlford House stands in solidarity with the Indigenous peoples as they grieve the recent discoveries of mass graves at former residential schools across Canada. As we recognize this heartbreaking reality, we renew our commitment to providing care for First Nations women. We acknowledge that our organization operates on the unceded territory of the Traditional Coast Salish Lands including the Tsleil-Waututh (səlil-wətaʔ), Kwikwetlem (kʷikwəʔləm), Squamish (Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw), and Musqueam (xʷməθkʷəy̓əm) Nations.

Here at Charlford House, we integrate First Nations customs into our program. We believe it's important for First Nations women to connect with their culture and spirituality as well as for all women to learn different ways of practicing the 12 Steps.

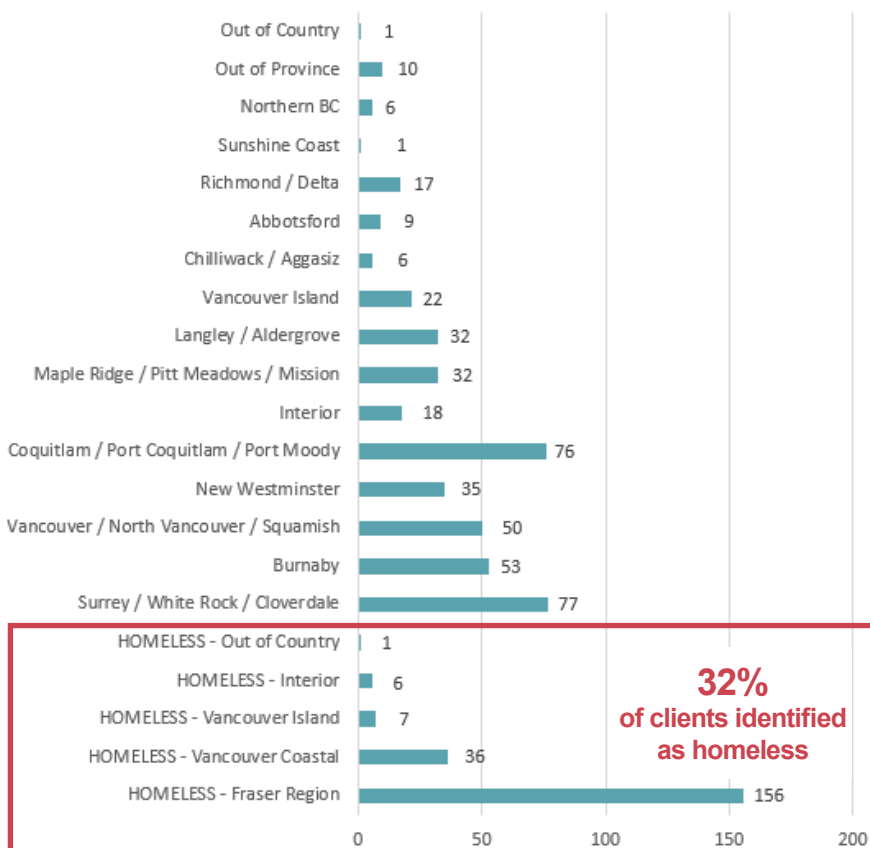
Under the guidance of Program Director Kaela McCann, an Indigenous woman, our women learn to understand First Nations history and customs. We work with First Nations Health Authority and elders to provide cultural safety for our First Nations clients. First Nations women connect with their culture and reckon with the impact substances and colonization have had on the First People under the safe guidance of the Charlford House staff.

The women of Charlford House are introduced to *The Red Road to Wellbriety: in the Native American Way*, a book outlining the Medicine Wheel, which is when the 12 Steps are placed in a circle, in alignment with the tribal circle teachings of First Nations. The women also learn how to smudge (a cleansing practice with sage, tobacco, and sweetgrass) and how to make dream catchers and the meaning behind these practices. Prior to COVID-19, elders would come to the house to explain the significance of drumming, have drumming circles, and take the women to sweats in the community.

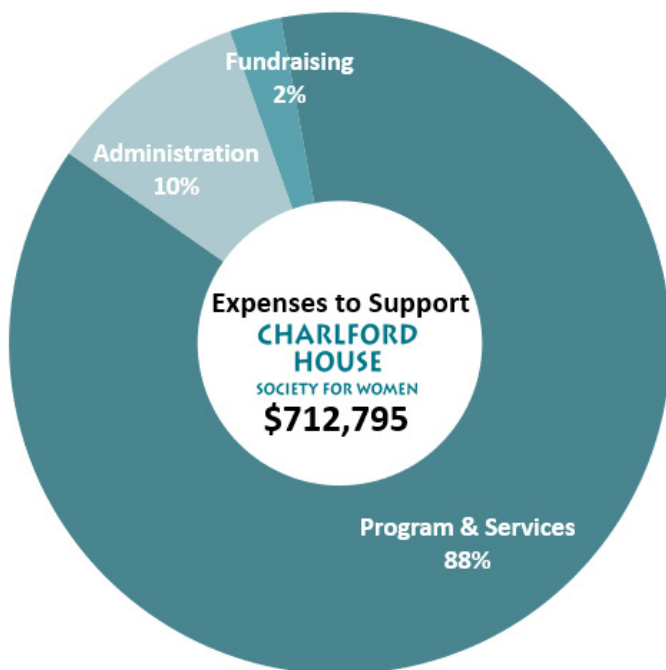
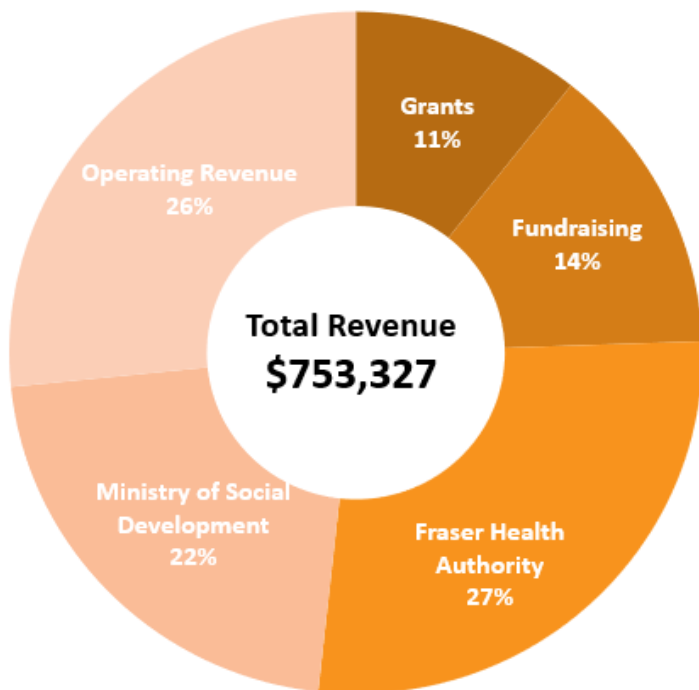
Here at Charlford House, we practice trauma-informed counselling as part of our program. Many First Nations women who pass through our doors are dealing with trauma as a direct result of residential schools. With the practices in place such as smudging and drumming, as well as the trauma-informed knowledge of our counsellors, we do everything we can to encourage healing, hope, and spirituality for our women.



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THANK YOU DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

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