



Canadian Mental  
Health Association  
North and West Vancouver  
*Mental health for all*

CMHA NORTH AND WEST VANCOUVER  
**ANNUAL REPORT**  
2019–20

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This report is dedicated to the memory of Keira Walsh

 *Cover photo: Youth in CMHA's Steps program on an Indigenous canoe tour*

## GET INVOLVED

### BECOME A MEMBER

Our members have a say in the future of CMHA, with the opportunity to run for and elect our governing board.

### BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR

Our programs and services would not be possible without the support of our donors. By becoming a monthly donor, you are supporting crucial services, as well as the growth of our organization, so we can achieve our vision of a mentally healthy North Shore community.

[northwestvancouver.cmha.bc.ca](http://northwestvancouver.cmha.bc.ca)



CMHA.NWV



CMHA\_NWV

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year's annual report is dedicated to a young person in our community who was able to use her own lived experience of struggle to show up for those who needed her. This young person is Keira Walsh, a participant in our Steps program. She died by suicide in December 2019, but in the 15 years that she lived in our community, she exemplified the true mission of the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA). She reminded us that our own experiences of pain can be transformative. These experiences allow us to show up for others who are struggling, and they help us carry the message "You are not alone."

It is this value that makes CMHA an essential organization in our community and in communities across the country. We accept you as you are, remind you that you're not alone and assist you to navigate your next steps to improve your quality of life.

We write this in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking back on the last year, it's hard not to believe that CMHA North and West Vancouver (NWW) was laying the building blocks to manoeuvre through this difficult challenge.

In 2019, CMHA NWW established an ambitious and thoughtful 3-year strategic plan (page 15). It was inwardly and outwardly focused, laying the foundation for a sustainable and strong organization. It involved a restructuring of our financial assets that included the sale of a property to another non-profit entity and the launch of CMHA NWW's first ever donor-advised fund. Our fund, seeded by a donor's bequest and the funds from the sale of the house, is housed at the Vancity Community Foundation and is valued at over \$1 Million. It will help set the organization on a path of sustainable growth for years to come.

Of equal importance, CMHA NWW focused on our people. We enhanced employee benefits and launched a new staff survey assessing the psychological health and safety of the team. We also began the work of decolonizing our work. As

temporary settlers, it is our responsibility to leave our communities and our land better than we found them. Acknowledging our colonial history was the impetus to build a much stronger connection with our friends at Tsleil-Waututh, Shíshálh, and Tla'amin Nations, and to grow our engagement with Aboriginal owned businesses and leadership.

In 2019, we also launched and enhanced our programs. CMHA NWW began to work towards building a presence across the Sunshine Coast community. We continued to grow our fee-for-service education programming. Our Steps youth program, the social support groups we host at the Kelty Dennehy Mental Health Resource Centre (Kelty), and our peer navigation services at Kelty and at Foundry, blossomed. We helped people feel less alone and able to navigate the services available across the public and non profit services. Many of our services are proving more effective than many government-run clinical or medical-based services. We invite you to learn more about this on page 7.

Meanwhile, the need for our counselling services grew beyond our grasp. Fortunately, at the time of writing this message, we succeeded in meeting the community's needs through a pandemic-related fund. It is essential that funding programs like these continue.

Overall, the people and businesses in our communities have responded with a warm embrace. Roper Greyell and Lawson Lundell maintained their support of CMHA NWW with pro-bono legal services; HSBC, Nicola Wealth, Strongman Group, North Shore Community Foundation, West Van Community Foundation, and Vancity came in with donations and sponsorships. This year, CMHA NWW saw an increase in donations from private donors and family foundations. We are honoured that our valuable community programming is recognized by these supporters.

Recognizing the need for robust municipal and provincial engagement, this year, CMHA NWW met with our local mayors and began to

explore opportunities to build a more equitable and safe community for those living precariously in our communities. This is a dialogue that has grown in importance as the threat of death from the overdose and COVID-19 crises has intensified. We are particularly thankful to those in faith communities such as North Shore Alliance Church for standing steadfast with us in our search for solutions.

As an organization, we ended the year in a stronger place than we started. The Board of Directors has continued to grow its governance capacity through training and dialogue, and it stands alongside the staff and volunteer group at CMHA NWV in reconfirming our commitment on an individual and collective basis to transform our own experiences of struggle to advocate for and support those feeling isolated and alone. It will be a year unlike any other, but with the building blocks in place, we will move towards a better, more empathetic future.

We invite you to join us.



**JOSHUA RADCLIFFE**  
Board Chair,  
CMHA North and  
West Vancouver



**JULIA KAISLA**  
Executive Director,  
CMHA North and  
West Vancouver

## YEAR AT A GLANCE



### MEMBERSHIP

51 members (↑)



### COUNSELLING

1,065 counselling sessions (↑)



### OUTREACH

400+ clients (↑)



### STEPS YOUTH PROGRAM

38 youth (↓ registration halted in March)



### TRAINING AND WORKSHOPS

299 registrations (↓ due to COVID-19)



### FACEBOOK REACH

161 followers  
Average of 22,785 impressions per month (↑)



### TWITTER REACH

1,126 followers  
Average 8,347 impressions per month (↑)




### NEWSLETTER

1,753 subscribers  
Average 37.7% open rate (↑)

↑ indicates increase from previous year, ↓ indicates decrease from previous year



 Lillian House residents staying safe

# HOUSING & HOMELESSNESS

CMHA NWV operates three fully-funded residential houses on the North Shore and provides a nurturing and supportive environment for 19 North Shore residents:



### HAROLD HOUSE

20-hour care to six women who are 50+ years of age and who deal with serious mental illness



### ARBORLYNN HOUSE

20-hour care to six young men 25–35 years of age, and who are dealing with serious mental illness and substance use issues



### LILLIAN HOUSE

20-hour care to seven men 45–65 years of age and who deal with serious mental illness

## New: Circle Of Care Group Home

CMHA NWV partnered with North Shore Alliance Church and Health Connections Clinic to provide housing to individuals on the North Shore who had previously experienced homelessness or who were at risk of homelessness. Through these partnerships, those living in the house are offered support to continue to develop their mental, physical, and spiritual wellness. Through funding from BC Housing, we were able to open our first Circle of Care house. The house has become a safe home for 3 men.

## Homeless Outreach

Our program connects people experiencing, or at risk of experiencing homelessness, to income assistance, housing, and community-based mental health services in North Vancouver and West Vancouver. Our outreach worker also addresses immediate physical and safety needs and provides support to clients after finding housing, including life skills support with budgeting, groceries, and home maintenance.

## OUR IMPACT

**400–500** individuals served

**22** individuals safely housed

**70–80** individuals prevented from becoming homeless

**40–50** individuals fast tracked on Income Assistance



# COUNSELLING & SUPPORT SERVICES

Our counselling program offers low-barrier individual counselling sessions to adults. Clients can access Registered Clinical Counsellors (RCCs) for \$50/hour and Masters Level Practicum Student Counsellors for \$25/hour. Some marginalized clients—such as clients experiencing homelessness, people with severe chronic health issues, and Indigenous people—are also able to access free counselling support by referral.

This year, we expanded our counselling program to include a second part-time RCC, as well as two volunteer RCCs. In addition to providing more counselling sessions, we are also working on creating a more comprehensive support for clients by connecting them with our other services, both before counselling while they are on our wait list, and after they finish counselling. These include peer groups and individual peer support, as well as drop-in services at the Kelty Dennehy Mental Health Resource Centre and free counselling at WorkBC for clients ready to return to work.

We continue to supervise practicum students who complete their counselling training with us. Typically, these are 4–8 month long internships, and in exchange for weekly supervision, students provide hundreds of hours of free counselling to our clients. This year, we worked with 5 students from various partner universities, including UBC, Adler University, Yorkville University, and City University.

We continue to struggle with counselling demand exceeding availability, and having a growing wait list for services. We are hopeful that the recent addition of virtual counselling services, combined with a grant from the BC government, will help to alleviate some of this pressure.

## OUR IMPACT

**1,065** counselling sessions provided over the year, an increase from the previous year

## COUNSELLING CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

*“Talking to (my counsellor) changed my life completely and gave me strength to move on out of my trauma I was stuck in for the most part of my life. She was an irreplaceable catalyst in my healing. I am very grateful. Thank you!”*

*“I’m so grateful I could receive the support I have from my counsellor and the Canadian Mental Health Association. I have found so much beauty in this life again after several years of feeling hopeless. I am so fortunate to have participated in a Wellness and Recovery Program (after the counselling), as it continues to better my life every day. I used to feel completely alone and this all made me realize none of us are alone, we are all in this together. I have gained the ability to find joy and happiness again.”*

*“I sincerely mean this statement—I used to feel like my head was too heavy to lift up and would always be looking down. I now feel gratitude in the simple ability to know all I need to do is lift my head off my pillow to carry on and be thankful.”*

# PEER SUPPORT & NAVIGATION

When people come to us, they are in distress and feeling alone. They often phone to ask for counselling services as these are the types of services most likely recommended by the medical system.

Our response is to connect them to the most accessible services available so they can begin their pathway to well-being. This may mean looping them into groups that might interest them or connecting them with a peer support worker. If they are a young person, they may connect into Steps.

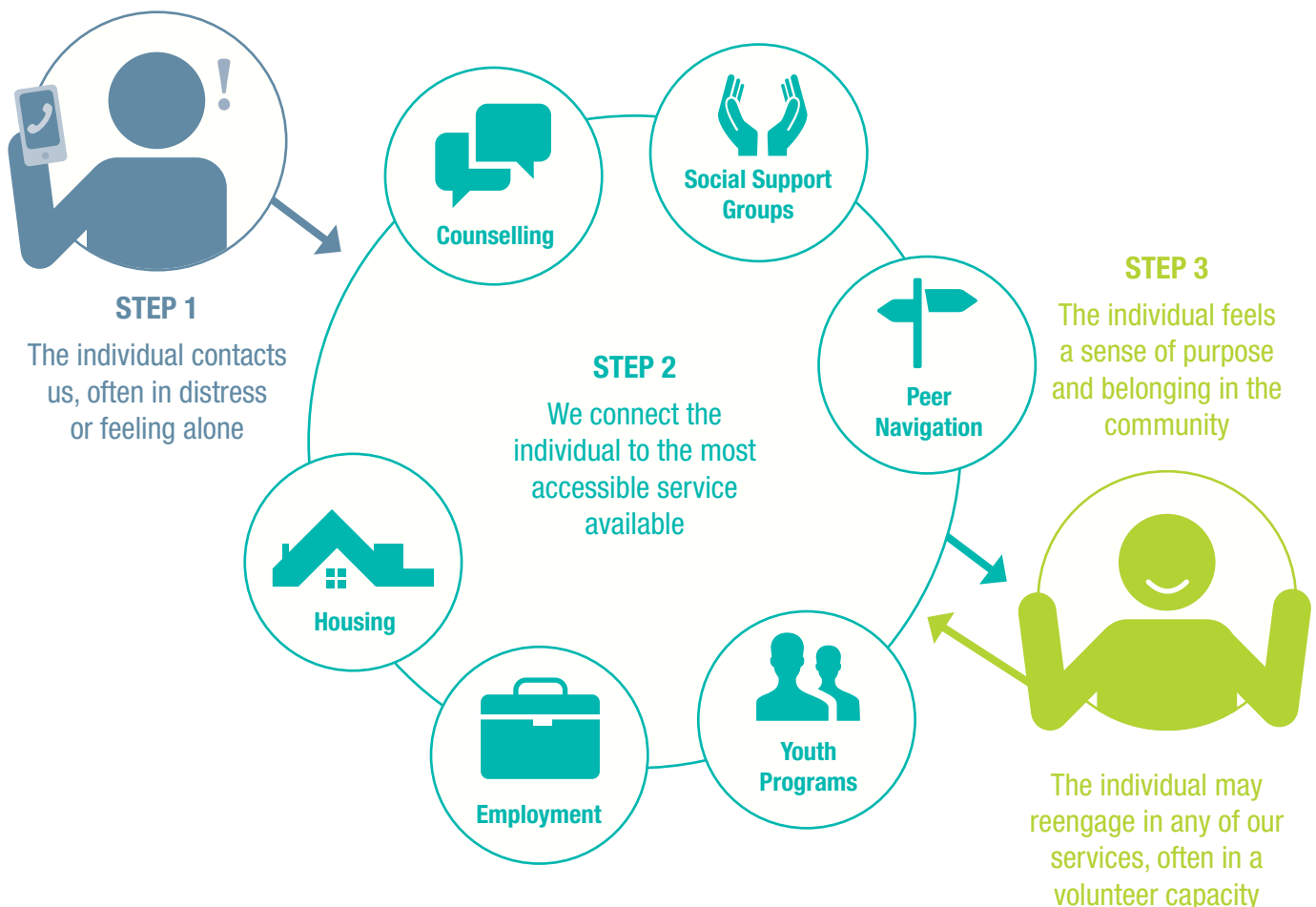
Often, this immediate acknowledgement of their struggle, accompanied by the message “you are not

alone,” helps to relieve their stress. They may stay with the groups while they access counselling, and then reconnect with a different group, such as Wellness Recovery Action Planning.

Our goals are to help them feel a sense of connection and belonging to a community. We also want them to start to consider their purpose. Volunteering is one way they can give back to the system of support.

Once individuals have moved through this system of support, they may re-engage with any of the services should they require them. Like life, the pathway to well-being is not always linear.

## PATHWAYS TO WELL-BEING



## Family Navigation

Our family navigator works with parents and families of youth to help them navigate the mental health system, make referrals to programs and services, and advocate for families in times of need. They also facilitate two weekly parent peer support groups.

In addition to supporting parents and families directly, our family navigator mentored and supported the North Shore Foundry Family Ambassadors and Provincial Family Ambassadors, participated in Let's Talk Shop parent evenings held at local high schools, and participated in the convening process of the opening of 6 new Foundry Centres. This included interviewing candidates from around the province and representing the voice of families and their needs at these new centres.

### OUR IMPACT

**332** navigation sessions held

**243** unique families supported



## Indigenous Peer Support

In 2019–20, CMHA NWV was contracted by Tsleil-Waututh Nation to deliver Indigenous peer support training to peers living in the communities of Tsleil-Waututh, Shísháhlh, and Tla'amin Nations. The work is part of a larger project to grow Indigenous peer support across a larger region, and is funded by First Nations Health Authority (FNHA).

CMHA NWV sits alongside FNHA, Tsleil-Waututh and Reciprocal Consulting at the Sub-Regional Indigenous Peer Support Steering Committee, and this experience has been transformative for all involved. It has led to the subcontracting and subsequent hiring of one of our counselling students to work as a full time therapist for children and adults living in the Tsleil-Waututh community.

It has also launched our organization on a path to decolonize our programming, and has resulted in steps being taken to achieve inclusivity at all levels of the organization. Our Counselling Manager has been approved by FNHA to provide culturally safe and trauma-informed mental health services under their health benefits program. In the community, CMHA

## FAMILY NAVIGATION CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

*“When I was feeling completely lost and separated from my daughter as she battled with her physical and mental health, I was referred to meet with [a family navigator]. There are so many ways she was able to assist me that I can't even begin to mention ... The thing that has helped me the most has been the weekly support. Having someone to communicate my concerns to and encourage me to hang in there has been such a blessing.”*

*“As a father of two young ladies ... I have had challenges maintaining a healthy relationship due to a complicated divorce and significant mental health challenges that their mother has lived with ... [The family navigator] has successfully introduced a solutions-based approach to sustain our healthy relationships. She answered our prayers.”*

has grown its advocacy voice in addressing the systemic injustices faced by Indigenous people and people of colour both in and outside of the mental health sector.

## Youth Peer Support

CMHA NWV provides peer support for North Shore youth out of Foundry North Shore. Our Youth Peer Support Team assist youth experiencing mental health and addictions by:

- Fostering a positive peer-to-peer connection
- Assisting with non-clinical goals like recreation, life skills, meeting new people, and finding employment
- Connecting clients with resources in the community
- Sharing their own lived experience

In 2019–20, our two peer supporters served 75 youth one-on-one. Our peer supporters also created and co-facilitated a Cooking and Life skills Group, an art-based Peer Group, and a Dungeons & Dragons Group.



## Kelty Dennehy Mental Health Resource Centre

Kelty Dennehy Mental Health Centre is a place where people affected by mental health challenges and their family and friends can feel comfortable in seeking support and connection to their community, as well as getting trusted information.

In 2019-20, our drop-in social groups were the number one reason why people visited the Centre. These groups provide space for participants to grow social connections, be creative, and learn new skills—all of which are known to have a positive impact on mental health.

Volunteers facilitate all our drop-in groups. They act as Centre Ambassadors, or support peer navigation. Through their engagement at the Centre, many volunteers have branched out to support CMHA as a whole, volunteering at warming stations, making bagged lunches for our outreach clients and North Vancouver's homeless population, and providing reception support at the Lonsdale office. We strongly believe that the social relationships intrinsic to volunteer work are critical to individual and community well-being. Most of our volunteers have lived experience, many of which were introduced to the Centre as patients. For many of them, volunteering is a free, low-risk tool that they fold into their mental health care.

### OUR IMPACT

**6,719** visits to the Kelty Dennehy Mental Health Centre

**42%** increase in visits to the Centre from the previous year

**1,426** hours of time generously gifted to us by volunteers

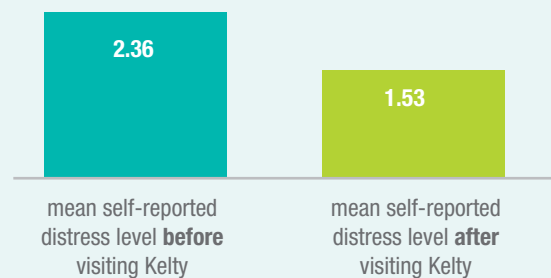
In late August, we began distributing a feedback survey asking patrons to self-report emotional distress levels before and after visiting the Centre as well asking them to rate their overall satisfaction with their visit and whether or not they planned to participate in the Centre's programs to support their mental wellness. Between late August 2019 and end of January 2020, we collected 103 surveys, an above average response rate of 3%:

- 62% of respondents said they were extremely satisfied with their visit
- 32% were satisfied
- 2% felt neutral and none reported feeling dissatisfied or extremely dissatisfied
- 80% said they plan on participating in Kelty programs to support their wellness.

We are particularly excited about the self-reported emotional distress levels—100% of respondents who reported some level of emotional distress upon visiting experienced a reduction in distress as a result of interacting with the Centre.

### 20% decrease in distress levels

after patrons' visit at Kelty compared to when they first arrived—with 100% decrease in levels of severe distress after visiting Kelty—based on feedback survey of 103 respondents.





📷 Two paintings created by Watercolour Group participants at the Centre

## KELTY DENNEHY MENTAL HEALTH CENTRE CLIENT TESTIMONIALS

*“Art therapy has given me hope—something positive to look forward to. Feeling welcomed, safe and accepted to be myself! Thank you and I am so grateful. Love it!”*

*“The watercolour class is fun, educational, and therapeutic. It can be whatever you want it to be for you and Barry gives you the freedom to learn from what he is doing or to just paint what you're feeling in the moment. It's also a great way to just meet new people, relax, and have a good time. New people are always welcome, and you just go at your own pace without any pressure.”*

*“The staff at Kelty Dennehy Mental Health Centre calmed me down and made me feel heard and they provided the referrals I needed. They are awesome! The compassion is palpable.”*

*“Many people have supported me in my recovery, yet you are the ones who encouraged, supported, and walked alongside me into actually being in a role again that reflects my interest and experience. I couldn't have done this without your direct support and encouragement.”*

# STEPS YOUTH PROGRAM

Steps is a recreation based group for North Shore youth experiencing challenges with their mental health. Most participants are living with anxiety and/or depression. Program goals include reducing participants' experiences of anxiety and depression, reducing isolation, and supporting recovery from mental illness through weekly physical activity and experience in nature. CMHA facilitates two Steps cohorts—Steps for 13–18 years old and Steps+ for 18–29 years old. In addition, participants receive one-on-one support from the Steps peer support workers. This program is offered free of charge.

The highlight of Fall 2019 was an Indigenous canoe tour with Takaya Tours for Steps and Steps+. Laser tag and bowling were also popular among both groups. Other activities included spin classes, modern dance/fitness lessons, indoor rock climbing, geocaching, ice skating, swimming, table tennis, tie dye, collage-making at the Polygon Art Gallery, yoga, and a trip to the Capilano Suspension Bridge.

This year, we prioritized Indigenous-focused activities, an important way of acknowledging the need to create cultural safety for our Indigenous youth. Along with the Indigenous canoe tour, we worked with a local Cree/Squamish woman who taught the youth how to make dream catchers.

Most of the individuals in Steps+ were really focused on their mental wellness for the long-term, and folks were quite committed to coming weekly and developing friendships. They built a support system for one another.

The youth in the Steps group were much younger than usual, with mostly 13 and 14 year olds. We had the support of peer mentors Camryn and Brison, former participants that attended to set examples for the youth and look out for those not fitting in as easily.

Charis from Foundry North Shore provided rehab assistance to the Steps+ group, helping integrate the group with Foundry services. We also had the help of our intern counsellor, Emily, for the young group, as well as Emma, a peer and a barista at our HOpe Cafe. We received support from community partners including Foundry, Power to Be, North

Shore Neighbourhood House, and North Vancouver Recreation and Culture.

All of our volunteers, peers, and community partners came together to support our Steps participants. Following the passing of Steps participant Keira Walsh in December 2019, her family and friends were forthcoming in their support of CMHA's Steps program. They spoke of Keira's dedication to the program and the importance of her relationship with Claire Ramsfield, CMHA's Steps Program Coordinator. Notable funds were raised to support the sustainability of the program, and CMHA is profoundly grateful.

**Keira's passing was also a chance to reflect on how CMHA can be a force for change:**

*"Perhaps Keira's journey can also remind us that every human being needs a place to be seen, however it is that they are in the world. The opportunity to show up exactly how one is is necessary, but not always safe or available. Spaces where we can be who we are offer us the opportunity to build meaning, purpose, and community."*

—Claire Ramsfield, Coordinator, Steps Youth Program



**Read Claire's full message at [northwestvancouver.cmha.bc.ca/news/in-memory-of-keira-walsh](https://northwestvancouver.cmha.bc.ca/news/in-memory-of-keira-walsh)**

## STEPS PROGRAM CLIENT TESTIMONIAL

*"Steps helped me get out of the house and socialize with peers. It's nice to connect with people who have gone through similar experiences. This group helped me cope with my mental illness, and is the first to offer support ... I enjoy the camaraderie and judgement-free zones that help with open up to people in a safe environment."*

# EMPLOYMENT

## WorkBC

CMHA NWW partners with North Shore Multicultural Services and the YWCA to deliver employment support at the North Shore WorkBC site. This year, the North Shore site embarked on year one of a new 5-year contract. The services have moved to include a greater focus on job sustainment.

CMHA NWW plays an important role in this contract. As readers of this report will know, employment is a social determinant of health. Not only is income essential to well-being, but work also creates purpose and belonging. CMHA has four staff that work as part of the WorkBC team, including two Case Managers, a Customized Employment Specialist, and a Registered Clinical Counsellor. The team receives operational supervision from the lead agency, the YWCA.

These services will no doubt become increasingly relevant as the true impact of the COVID-19 crisis plays out over the coming year. Addressing the mental health needs of those experiencing employment loss or insecurity will take on renewed importance.

## CMHA's HOpe Café



Located in the HOpe Centre at Lions Gate Hospital, HOpe Café is a Blenz franchise and social enterprise that employs people with lived experience of mental illness. Our mission is to provide a supportive and inclusive environment for our employees and the community.

HOpe Café helps people on their path to recovery build skills, work experience, and self-confidence in a supportive work environment. The café also helps build a sense of community while breaking down stigma around mental illness.

In mid-March, the cafe was closed due to COVID-19 and the related closure of the HOpe Centre to visitors.

# MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

In 2018, CMHA NWW launched mental health education services. Our staff or contract trainers provide Mental Health First Aid, Mental Health First Aid for First Nations, and many customized courses. Topics have ranged from suicide awareness and prevention to resilience.

Over the past year, our branch also worked alongside a collective of CMHAs across BC to develop shared content and courses. Growing mental health literacy is important because it builds capacity, not just for informed personal choice but collective, social, and

political action. When mental health is understood and recognized across a community, there is more value placed on mental health promotion.

This year, although the COVID-19 pandemic caused a decrease in bookings later in the year, we were able to train nearly 300 people in our community—down from nearly 400 in the previous year. The pandemic will no doubt make this type of training essential for businesses, community service agencies, various levels of government, and many others.



## EVENTS

Over the 2019–20 year, CMHA NWV was fortunate to build new relationships with organizations and families, and be the beneficiary of multiple events.

For the second year, CMHA received funds raised through the Run Like a Girl's Be Fearless trail run, hosted at Alice Lake in Squamish. Our Steps youth staffed a refreshment table and our Executive Director welcomed the runners.

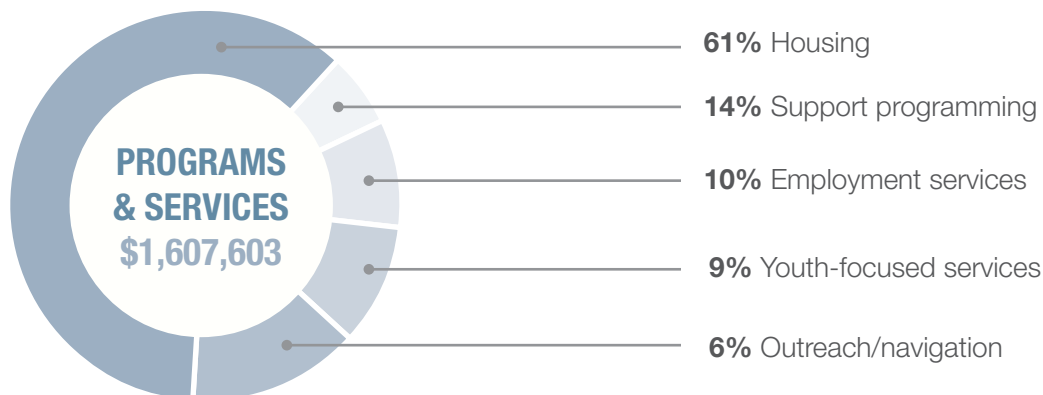
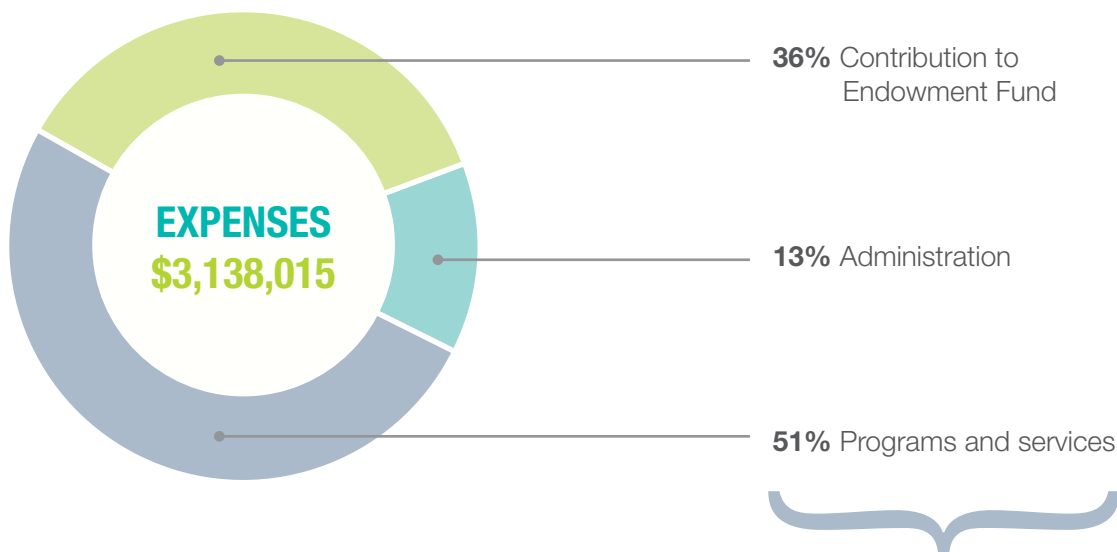
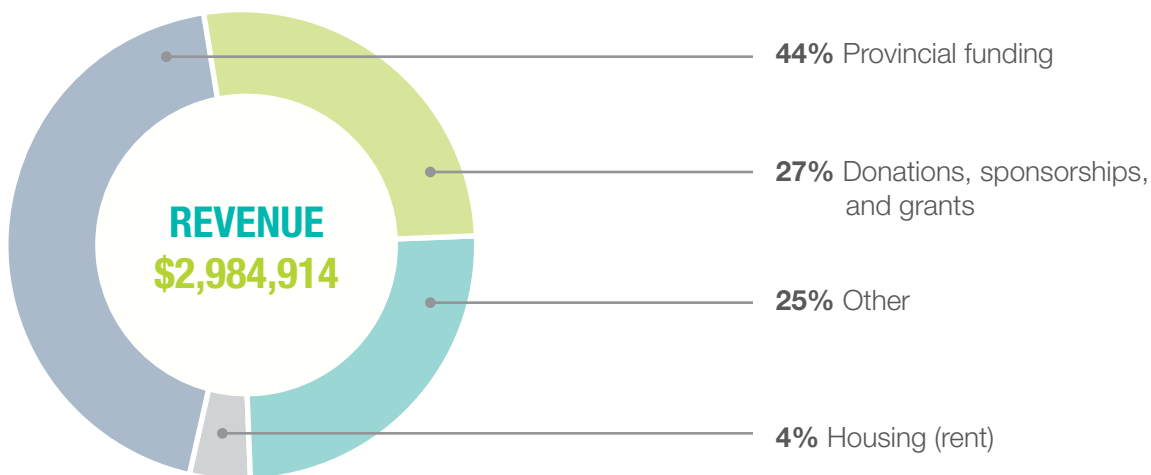
We also received over \$11,000 from the Daoust Family Golf Tournament, held annually at Northlands Golf Course. This is the 4<sup>th</sup> year they have raised funds for CMHA NWV, and we love being part of their community.

What could be better than ice cream for a good cause? COWS partnered with CMHAs across Canada on their Moo Let's Talk. All funds received were donated to CMHAs. Our branch received over \$5,000 in funds raised at the Whistler store.

 Above left: Sydney Mattu, CMHA Housing Manager and Tejal Barde, CMHA Outreach Coordinator greeting people at COWS Whistler for Moo Let's Talk

Above right: From left to right—Josh Radcliffe, Chair, CMHA NWV Board of Directors, Niki Daoust, Daoust Golf Tournament organizer, Julia Kaisla, Executive Director, CMHA NWV, and Drew Gelley, Daoust Golf Tournament organizer

# FINANCES



# STRATEGIC PLAN 2019–2022

## VISION: MENTAL HEALTH FOR ALL

We feel more connected  
to each other  
We share our stories  
We speak courageously  
We are resilient  
We recover  
We are whole



### THEME/PRIORITY 1 **WORK IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION**

**Deliver** effective and  
needed programs and  
services

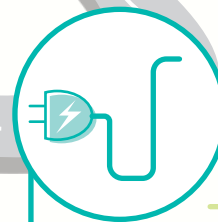
- 1 Quality of life is  
increased
- 2 Expand services into  
the Sunshine Coast
- 3 Advocate for change



### THEME/PRIORITY 2 **A STEADY RIDE TO OUR NEXT DESTINATION**

**Sustain** people and  
partnerships

- 1 Enhance retention: Staff  
and volunteers feel  
valued and supported
- 2 Promote learning: Staff and  
volunteers are trained and  
feel capable
- 3 Integrate inclusion:  
Representation (diversity  
and geographic) is  
addressed at each level



### THEME/PRIORITY 3 **FUEL FOR OUR MOVEMENT**

**Achieve** financial  
sustainability

- 1 Grow fee for service  
counselling and training
- 2 Grow philanthropy: Build  
foundation for innovation  
and stability
- 3 Maintain integral contacts:  
Housing and employment
- 4 Grow key contracts: Peer  
and Family Support



**Canadian Mental  
Health Association**  
North and West Vancouver  
*Mental health for all*

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