



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Vernon & District
Mental health for all

impact Report

2019 - 2020



message from Leadership

Big changes marked this past year as we continued to build upon the pillars of education, employment and housing as key components to a mentally healthy community.

In April, we became a Work BC partner to provide customized employment services for those with mental health challenges. Our Albert Place project to add 30 units of affordable housing in Vernon, will be close to breaking ground in late 2020.

Thanks to a generous donation from Kalamalka Rotary Club Dream Auction, we were able to undergo a much-needed renovation in our kitchen, turning our kitchen nightmares of outdated, broken-down appliances and cabinetry to a commercial-grade dream kitchen. Our Nutrition program serves more than 9,000 meals each year!

In September, Men's Shed Vernon joined CMHA to elevate social connection and community support to retired men in our community.

We increased our educational offerings to train more leaders in suicide prevention, and launched two new youth programs to provide tweens with coping and resiliency skills and to deliver school presentations to a total of 406 youth last year in grades 6 to 12.

We published a Suicide Prevention Handbook for teachers and organizations taking part in our mental health workshops and hosted a monthly education series at the library on mental illness.

And then came the challenges... on March 13, we quickly responded to the announcement of the COVID-19 global pandemic. Within one week, we managed to transition our programs to phone-based and online support, and delivery of freezer-ready meals for participants in our Kitchen and Nutrition program.

Our Crisis Line had its busiest year ever, with a dramatic increase in calls during February. March set a new record bringing our calls for the year up to 8,019, a staggering increase from last year's 6,529 calls.

We know there will be many challenges to face in the coming year and likely beyond. We know the toll that is being taken on so many individuals, families, businesses and organizations.

Together, we will continue to serve our community's most urgent needs... with determination, caring and kindness.



Julia Payson
Executive Director



Richard Finn
President

board of Directors

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Richard Finn

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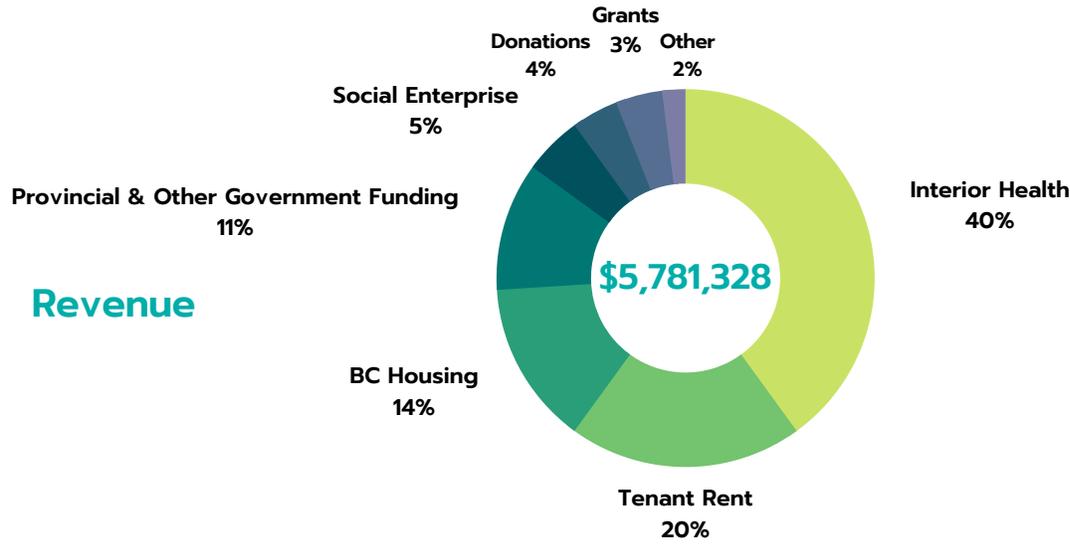
Tom Christensen

SECRETARY

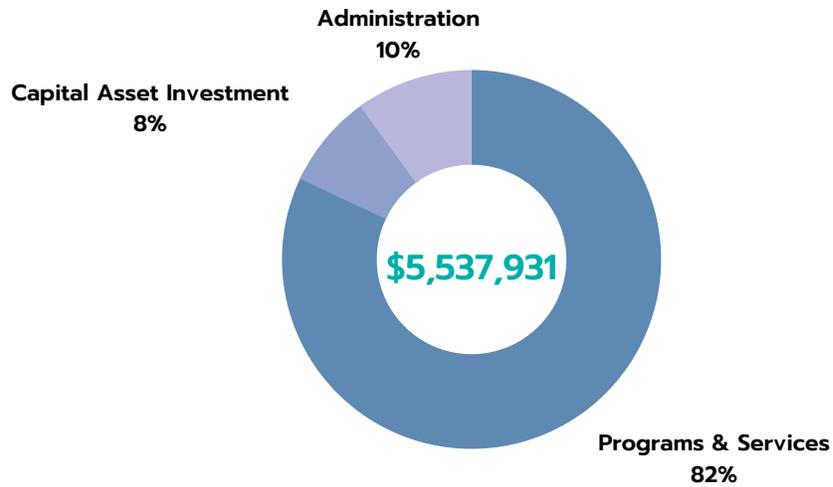
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financial Stewardship

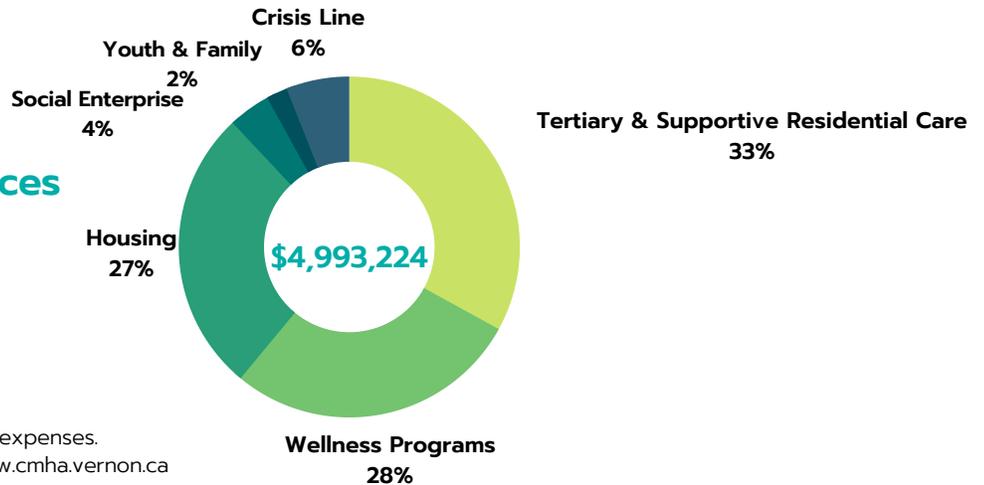
Revenue



Expenses



Programs & Services



*Mortgage principle payments are not included in expenses.
Full financial statements are available online at www.cmha.vernon.ca

a changing World



Everything we stand for is about connecting people to community.

The circumstances we are facing will not stop us from doing that.

On March 13, CMHA made the difficult decision to transition our programs and services to online or phone-based and delivery due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

CMHA staff immediately began making daily check in phone calls to our participants to keep connected and make sure everyone is doing OK.

We enlisted volunteers for our new Phone Buddy program to connect individuals experiencing isolation or anxiety with a trained phone buddy to give support.

Within three days, we had begun home meal delivery to our participants and those of other agencies who had to suspend operations due to their staffing and funding challenges.

During the last two weeks of March, we had prepared more than 200 freezer-ready meals for delivery to participants.

Our Crisis Line answered a record number of calls in March, with more than one-third related to anxiety about COVID.

At the end of March we debuted our first online Wellness Webinars from our Healthy Minds, Connected Minds series to provide free mental health education to the public.

By transitioning in-person services to online and phone support, we can continue to help those most vulnerable in our community.

Those who have been marginalized for much of their lives, need to know they are not alone and are still connected to people and a community that deeply cares for their well-being.



social connection & Education



Mental Health Awareness

Through community events and forums, mental health workshops, as well as school and workplace training, CMHA provides community mental health education and awareness to more than 2,500 individuals each year.

By age 40, 50% of Canadians will have experienced a mental health challenge. Education, awareness and training helps empower community members with knowledge, resources, skills and support systems to face these critical challenges, together, as a community.



CMHA's mental health education and awareness initiatives are generously supported by the Community Foundation of the North Okanagan, United Way Southern Interior BC, local businesses and individuals.

Men's Shed Vernon

Established in 2017 by a group of senior men who saw the need for socialization and productivity for men in retirement, the group formally became a program of CMHA Vernon in September.

Men's Shed aims to bring greater awareness of senior men's mental health to the community and provide a space and opportunity for them to thrive with purpose.

With a mission to build meaning and well-being in men's lives by engaging hands, hearts and minds, Men's Shed members have worked on projects such as building tables for a youth camp, a gazebo for a women's shelter and refinished benches for the Allan Brooks Nature Centre.



Men's Shed is generously supported by Community Foundation of the North Okanagan, Employment & Social Development Canada, local businesses such as Elephant Storage and individual donors.

peer Support

CANADIAN MENTAL
HEALTH ASSOCIATION

VERNON & DISTRICT BRANCH

A Registered Charitable Society
Serving our Community Since 1951



"Living with a mental illness can make you feel like you're all alone.

But there is a group of caring people who have been through the struggles you are having."

- Colin, Peer Support Volunteer

For Colin Carney, talking about mental health is like talking about the common cold. "Sharing my struggles with my illness is pretty normal, as it should be. I hope to change the misconceptions when people hear words like 'bipolar' and others associated around this almost-taboo subject."

As a long-time peer support volunteer for CMHA, Colin has spent the past 12 years learning about mental illness, sharing his knowledge and experiences, taking part in training and mental health education courses, assisting with presentations, visiting psychiatric patients at the hospital, and offering his time to mentor and support others with mental illness.

But it wasn't always this way. In his early twenties Colin was diagnosed with a bipolar depression and an anxiety disorder. "It was scary. I didn't understand what was wrong. Neither did family and friends, but they remained supportive. This support gets me through my episodes."

Colin finds sharing his story empowering. Opening up to others helps to eliminate the stigma attached

to the words 'mental health' and 'mental illness'. He says when you find people you trust, share your story with them.

Peer support offers the opportunity for one-to-one interaction through shared activities with someone who understands.

"When you have a mental illness, you tend to isolate. With peer support, there's a common ground to connect and relate. We've all been there, struggling with mental illness, but are well enough to support others."

The non-judgmental approach to peer support provides a sense of community that makes it safe to take part in. "You don't have to worry about having a bad day - you are still accepted no matter what."

Colin says he wants to direct people to healing places they help design themselves so they can have empowerment. "I aim for increasing the well-being of others and get happiness in return."

suicide grief Support

It's OK to ask for help when you are feeling alone or troubled. You are important and not alone; there is always someone to reach out to.

- Jeff, Volunteer

Losing a loved one to suicide can be one of the most difficult types of trauma to overcome. Anger, depression, loneliness and guilt are just some of the emotional responses, in addition to physical symptoms that can overwhelm individuals dealing with loss from suicide.

Vernon resident Jeff Teale knows all too well the after-effects of the shock and pain after losing his son Dallas to suicide in the fall of 2018. Jeff took part in CMHA's eight-week Suicide Grief Support Group offered free of charge for those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

"I needed help to understand and cope with the extreme grief and trauma that I felt about losing my son. As I struggled through the pain, it was comforting to receive support from others who have suffered the same loss."

Participants often feel a disconnect from their regular supports as people do not know how to approach them or talk about suicide.

CMHA's Suicide Grief Support Group fosters a safe environment for those impacted by suicide loss to speak openly and honestly about their sorrow.

"Participants arrive as strangers displaying an array of emotions with vulnerability being the most evident," said Emily Hollenbach, CMHA Crisis Line Coordinator. "Before long, peer connection is built through storytelling and shared experience and those who were once strangers leave as friends."



The group provides an opportunity to discuss and share feelings and experiences related to the loss of a loved one, including the impact of guilt, anger and regret, coping as a family, building a support network, honouring the memory of a loved one, and coping with birthdays, anniversaries and holidays. Suicide loss support groups are free of charge and led by CMHA trained facilitators.

Throughout the sessions, Jeff learned resilience, how to cope and how to heal. Since then, he has become an important voice for those who have lost a loved one to suicide. Jeff spoke at World Suicide Prevention Day in September 2019, voiced a PSA on Beach Radio for the Support Group, and is an inspiring example of strength and resilience in the face of tragedy and pain.

Jeff said attending the sessions helped him gain knowledge and strategies to cope with losing his son to suicide. "It's OK to ask for help when you are feeling alone or troubled. You are important and not alone; there is always someone to reach out to."

kitchen Connections



A generous gift of \$25,000 from the Kalamalka Rotary Dream Auction turned kitchen nightmares into a commercial-grade dream kitchen for the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Vernon & District Branch.

The cabinet doors were falling off almost daily, the countertops and backsplash were peeling, the sanitizer broke down, and the stove didn't work.

Kalamalka Rotarian Dave DeShane took on the task of managing the renovation project, bringing in a dedicated team of volunteers and caring businesses who donated their time and offered significant discounts on equipment and supplies.

CMHA's nutrition program supports healthy living and ongoing recovery for people living with a mental illness by providing affordable, nutritious meals 6 days per week, as well as take-out meals.

There is also a nutrition education component, volunteer cooking and support roles, employment training, food safe classes, and a community

building social component. Our kitchen is truly the heart of CMHA programming, bringing people together for healthy food and social interaction.

CMHA Vernon has been successfully running this program for 20 years, while also using the kitchen facility for youth programming, and sharing the space with other organizations who work with people in need of nutrition and social connection.

By expanding the service last year to include an extra day, CMHA staff and volunteers prepared and shared more than 9,000 meals.

CMHA is grateful to Kal Rotary and the volunteers and businesses for their overwhelming support in elevating this project from a kitchen renovation to an inspiring community collaboration.

Sadly, Dave DeShane passed away in July 2020. To honour his generous community spirit, the CMHA Kitchen has been named, "Dave's Kitchen."

new Beginnings

"If you are experiencing challenges and are scared, you can reach out to CMHA.

They are here for us."

- Barb, Volunteer

It was 12 years ago when Barb Erdmann experienced a sudden and dramatic event that would change her life in ways she never imagined.

"It was February 4, 2008. I was at work and knew something wasn't right. My boss kept looking at me and asked what was wrong with my eye."

Barb went home that day with a bloodshot eye, fever, chills and hives, thinking it was some type of physical ailment. Week after week, she tried to return to work, but eventually had to take a long-term disability leave.

"I had no idea at the time how this was going to affect my life. I didn't realize how hard it would be." For the past 12 years Barb has suffered from debilitating depression and chronic fatigue.

While living in Langley, she decided to take a course in coping with depression. "I didn't think it was going to help, but I was incredibly wrong."

Within the second week of the course, she realized depression is a disease, not a character flaw. With her newfound understanding, Barb decided it was time for another change.

She moved back to her hometown of Vernon with hopes of a better future.

To get the mental health help she needed, she wanted to be in a smaller community with the support systems of friends and family.



"The thing that was holding me back was that I didn't think I was sick enough to need help from CMHA and I didn't want to take resources from other people."

Barb began volunteering in the CMHA office to see if she could sustain a regular work schedule. Soon she was referred to CMHA's WorkBC case manager to help her find a job.

"I wanted to do something to help people. So I decided to help the people who help others."

For the first time in 11 years, Barb is back at work and enjoying her new beginning. With her background in bookkeeping, Barb now puts her valuable skills and experience to good use working for Independent Living.

"I know not everyone can be open and share about their mental health challenges. I combat stigma by being open - by letting people know I have these things in my life, but I can still live my life. I am so grateful everyday."

ride don't Hide



A downpour of rain couldn't stop the outpouring of generosity and community spirit as more than 170 community members including 156 riders and striders took part in the 7th annual Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) Ride Don't Hide event at Creekside Park June 2019.

Over \$59,000 towards the \$60,000 goal was raised from online registrations and donations, a virtual ride hosted at Soul Studio fitness club, and proceeds from a bike raffle held by The Medicine Shoppe.

The annual ride creates a safe, open community where individuals can talk about their mental health free of judgment.

The Vernon ride is one of the most successful Ride Don't Hide events in the country, last year raising more funds per capita than any other community.

To date, Ride Don't Hide has raised more than \$228,000 for CMHA, Vernon & District Branch mental health programs.

For the third consecutive year, a Vernon team was the top fundraising team in Canada. Liam's Lunar Dragons raised an astounding \$25,481 this year, bringing its three-year fundraising total to nearly \$90,000.

The team was established by volunteer Ride Don't Hide committee member Sheila Stainton in memory of her son Liam Hack.

Ride Don't Hide has allowed us to continue to support our youth programs and to expand our early intervention, prevention and educational services.

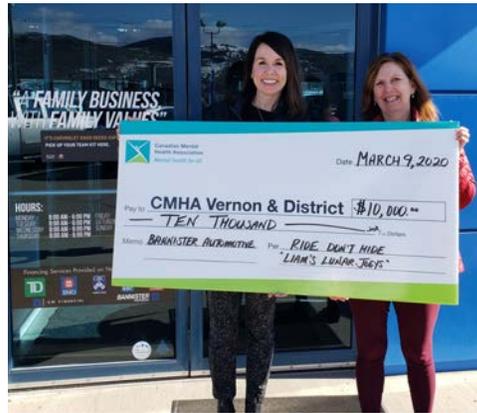
Funds from Ride Don't Hide also support CMHA's 24/7 Crisis Line, providing support, tools and resources to help callers find the help they need.

With amazing support from the community we will continue to work towards ending mental health stigma and providing vital programs and services to ensure mental health for all!

ride don't Hide

We gratefully acknowledge our sponsors and supporters for their continuing dedication to bring mental health into the open.

SUPPORTERS: Dave MacKenzie - Emcee, Consie Severson - Warm-up coach from Ladies World, Princess Silver Star Madison Barrett, Okanagan Science Centre, O'Keefe Ranch, Olympia Cycle, St. John's Ambulance, The Tent Guys, Bannister GM, Davidson LLP, Hillview Elementary, MNP, SunRype, VantageOne Credit Union, Vernon Toyota, Watkin Motors



2019
 Total amount raised: \$59,149
 Sponsorships: \$21,500
 Registrations: 158
 Donors: 356
 Riders, Striders & Spin Riders: 218
 Teams: 20



community Support

Thank you to our community who generously supported CMHA in our mission to promote Mental Health for All!



TOP ROW

- Simply Delicious raised more than \$4,000 for Youth Programs from their CMHA for Kids program
- Justin Sharma from City Furniture donated a futon for our Crisis Line volunteers - and very much appreciated by our support dog, Gus



SECOND ROW

- First West Foundation supported our Farm Friends program with a donation of \$8,673
- North Star Martial Arts Academy's anti-bullying event raised \$257 in memory of Liam Hack
- Marty flips burgers for the crowd at our annual community Block Party celebration at Polson Park

THIRD ROW

- Awakening the Spirit Art Show at the Vernon Arts Centre celebrated the therapeutic benefits of art
- Vernon Doctors Hockey Tournament raised \$2,500 for youth education in memory of Laura Taylor
- The Teassential Crane Project donated \$100 to CMHA programs

BOTTOM ROW

- Kari from Elevate Spa at Silver Star hosted a customer appreciation event raising \$48



community Caring

Thank you to our community who generously supported CMHA in our mission to promote Mental Health for All!



TOP ROW

- The GNS Society hosted Bollywood Bang presented by Sunterra Custom Homes. The event took place at Predator Ridge raising an amazing \$33,922 for the Crisis Line and Youth Programs
- VantageOne staff donated \$600 from their staff Jeans Day to CMHA programs
- As part of its annual Credit Union Day, our local Prospera Credit Union donated \$200, plus we received a matching donation of \$200 from their head office



CENTRE ROW

- The Longhorn Pub donated \$2,000 towards the Bollywood Bang event
- Shawn from Beach Radio produced our ads for the Community Airtime Award in partnership with Lake City Casinos and Hytec, A Kohler Company. CMHA received \$35,000 in airtime to bring awareness of local mental health to our community



BOTTOM ROW

- A generous \$10,000 grant from the TELUS Future Friendly Foundation will support the Youth Mental Health Connections program
- CMHA's annual Gift of Hope Campaign raised funds and gift packages for seniors, families and youth
- Sisters Sarah and Sophie created reusable bags to sell at our Georgette Thrift Shop to raise funds for programs and help the environment
- O'Hair's The Salon donated \$300 from its Spin to Win event and Jeans Day fundraiser

community Strength

Thank you to our community who generously supported CMHA in our mission to promote Mental Health for All!



TOP ROW

- Matthew and Dayley Field raised \$775 from their Summer's End Golf Tournament last September, then collected another \$500 in donations to fund CMHA programs
- Karen and Alison from The Room Collection auctioned a beautiful dresser for \$440 and donated an additional \$100. Longtime customer, Debra, had the winning bid!



SECOND ROW

- Kal Tire donated new studded winter tires for our truck that we use for our social enterprises
- Bracken Insurance - The Co-operators chose CMHA as their charity of choice for a donation of \$1,000
- Mixing it Up for Mental Health at Durali Villa raised more than \$4,000 for Youth Programs

THIRD ROW

- Student Taylor Ulmer created Innocent Voices magazine, with 50% of profits going to Youth Programs
- Funtastic Sports Society donated \$2,500 to purchase camping supplies for our Recreation Programs

We would also like to thank the generous support from: Byram Family Foundation, Army, Navy, Airforce Unit #5, Vernon Legion #25 and the City of Vernon Council Discretionary Grant



highlights at a Glance

3,466

participants in
**RECREATION
& EDUCATION**
programs



The
CRISIS LINE
team answered
8,019 calls



8,665
MEALS
prepared
and
served



144
affordable
HOMES
for **261**
residents

9,909
Good Morning
PROGRAM
SAFETY
CALLS



\$250,635
Raised from
Social
Enterprise

- Lawn Maintenance
- Recycling Program
- Georgette Shop
- Shipping & Receiving

VOLUNTEERS
donated



22,401
HOURS



**Canadian Mental
Health Association**
Vernon & District
Mental health for all

**Canadian Mental Health Association
Vernon & District**

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