

Impact Report

2022 2023

Canadian Mental Health Association

Vernon & District Branch



CMHA Vernon has experienced another significant year of growth, but it was also a time for reflection as we continue to strive to meet the people we serve where they are at in an ever-changing world.

During 2022/23, our organization saw many projects long in the vision stage become reality, with a particular emphasis on housing. While last year saw the addition of the North Okanagan Rent Bank, this year, we welcomed families and seniors into the brand-new townhomes at Albert Place. We also assumed operation of Veridian Housing on behalf of BC Housing, ensuring long-term stability for tenants, and increasing access to CMHA programming and services.

In terms of ensuring individuals can access services they need, Care2Speak expanded this year beyond health care workers to include people working in the social services sector so they can connect with peers. From our own working experience in this field, we know that the pandemic and poisoned drug supply has created additional stress and trauma for people working in community, and we are so grateful to be able to expand peer support across BC to folks who serve others.

Also, this year, we expanded our partnership with Talk Suicide, the operator of the national suicide crisis line. Our Crisis Line team continues to support local and provincial lines with compassion and care, even as we expand our support those who reach out via the nation-wide crisis lines.

In 2021 CMHA was asked by the Foord Family Foundation what we would do with a transformational gift.



Jodi Cunningham
President



Julia Payson
Executive Director

The answer was clear, we would launch integrated youth services. We started to envision integrated youth programming in 2019 when we brought together community members to discuss how best we could support our young people. The Foord Family Foundation has amazed us with our largest donation ever, more than \$1.5 million over three years. With this support, we were able to purchase a building that will be the future home of integrated youth services and we started operating a temporary space to ensure we can support youth in the meantime.

None of this can happen without the incredible CMHA staff. As noted, it's not an easy time to work in this field and our teams continue to focus on how best to serve folks in our community. A special shout out to our Social Committee and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee. Both groups work extra hard to find ways to make our workplaces somewhere that staff feel comfortable and celebrated as their entire selves. Amazing work!

Our work has grown because of the North Okanagan community and the individuals, service clubs and businesses that embrace our vision of mental health for all through financial support and advocacy. We are extremely grateful for your ongoing support. Thank you.



OUR VISION

Mentally healthy people in a healthy society.

OUR MISSION

At CMHA Vernon, we have built a community of support for individuals and their families living with mental health challenges, from youth programs to housing to education to employment to psychosocial rehabilitation. We help people in our community find the best type of care or service to match their need.

As the nation-wide leader and champion for mental health, CMHA facilitates access to the resources people require to maintain and improve mental health and community integration, build resilience, and support recovery from mental illness.



*CMHA Vernon and District
Service Area*

OUR VALUES

- Embracing the voice of people with mental health and addictions issues.
- Promoting inclusion.
- Working collaboratively.
- Influencing the social determinants of health.
- Using evidence to inform our work.
- Being transparent and accountable.
- Focusing on the mental health needs of all age groups.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We acknowledge that our work takes place within the ancestral, traditional and unceded territory of the Syilx Okanagan and Secwepemc Nations.

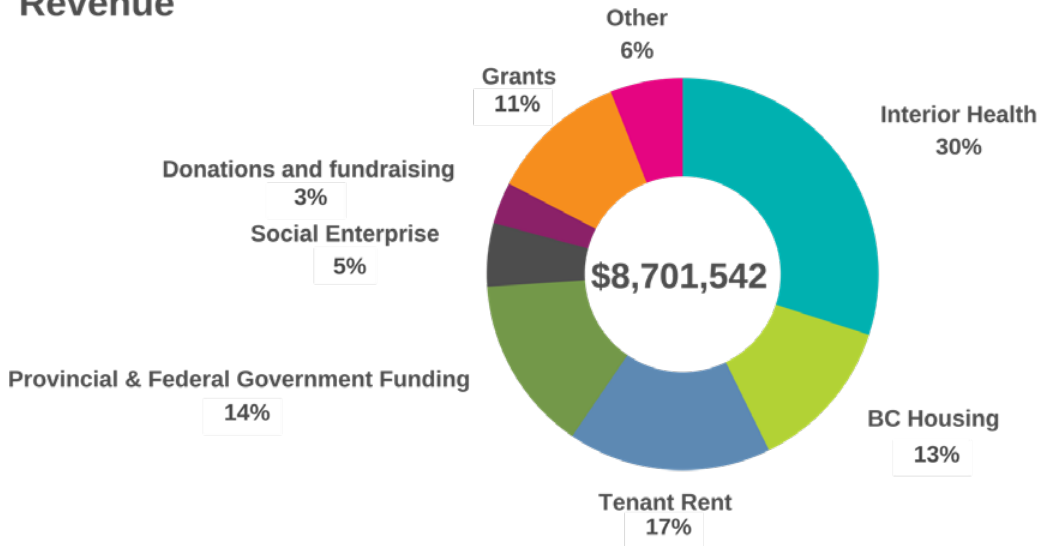


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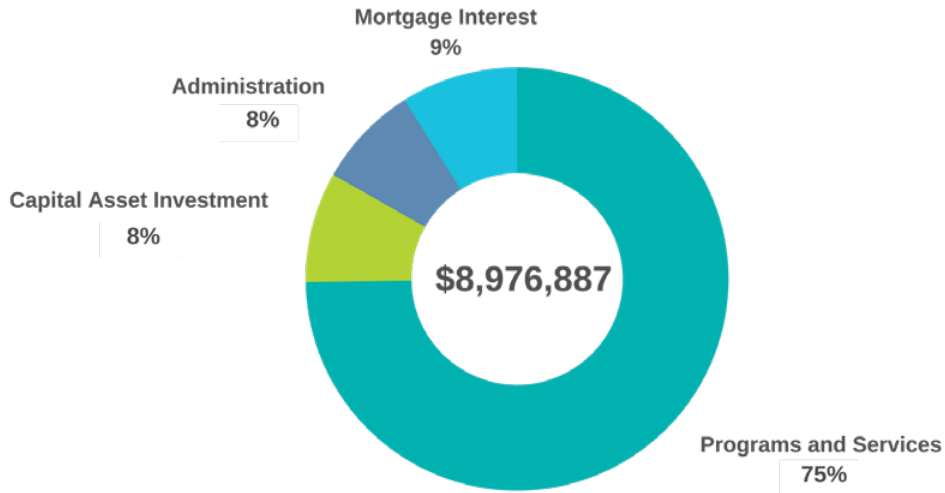
Vernon & District Branch

Finances

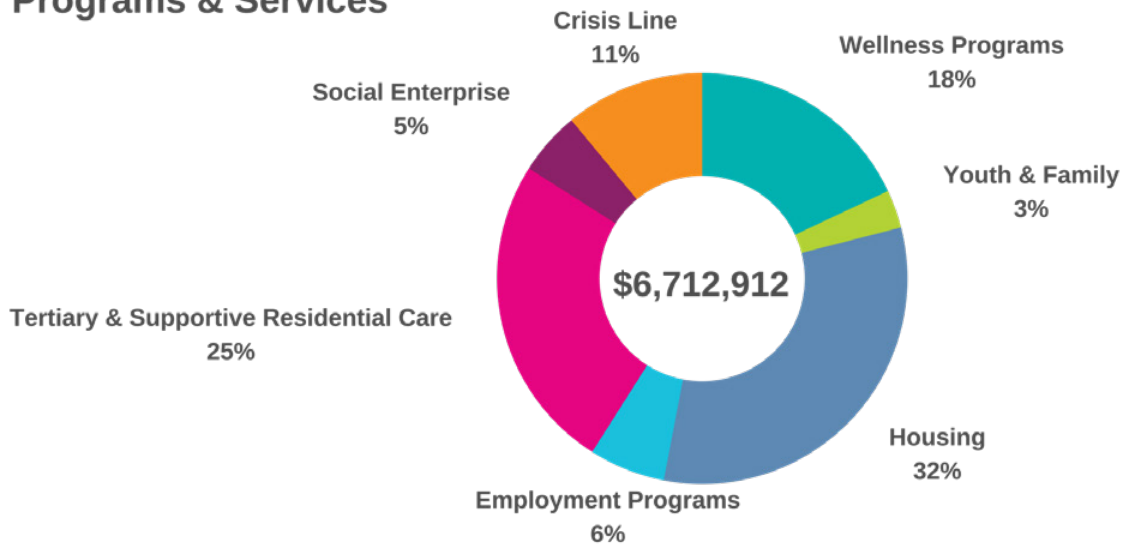
Revenue



Expenses



Programs & Services



To view this and previous reports online visit: <https://cmhavernon.ca>

* Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number



Canadian Mental Health Association

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Stories of Compassion.

Action taken to support youth and families.

Youth and families were struggling for help. Waitlists were ballooning. Frustration was building. A bold move was required, and the Canadian Mental Health Association embraced the challenge. The Youth Integrated Services Hub cracked open its doors in a temporary facility on 30th Avenue in 2023 as the sense of urgency over youth mental health heightened.

“For many caregivers, it feels as though the only help they can access is when they are in crisis,” said Carly Skanes, youth integrated services manager.

“Youth feel that when they do access services it doesn't come from a youth lens, that it is another adult telling them what and how they need instead of them being in the lead.”

The need for integrated youth supports had been on the radar for some time and was highlighted in 2019 during the original application for a Foundry site, but a lack of funding stalled any progress. That was until an unexpected offer of support was received from the Foord Family Foundation in fall 2021.

None of this would be happening without the Foord Family Foundation. It was just an idea we had, and they came along and made it concrete,” said Carly.

“It’s difficult to describe how transformative the support of the Foundation has been.



It’s life changing and lifesaving. We appreciate the Foord Family Foundation’s leadership.”

A critical component to YISH is ensuring youth aren’t just sitting on the sidelines but take ownership for how the initiative evolves. Young people’s life experiences inform the space and programs.

“Youth have a say every step of the way. They give so much input on what’s needed or what they wish they had. They ask how they can support their friends,” said Carly. Since opening, YISH has broadened the resources available to youth ages 12 to 24 and programming will increase, including a move from virtual counselling to having a counsellor on staff this fall.

Since the end of the 2023 fiscal year, CMHA Vernon has been confirmed as a future Foundry Partner, which will ensure a permanent location and core operations for the youth services are provincially funded and part of the Foundry BC network.

Stories of Compassion.

Albert Place II fosters a strong sense of community.

The first time you visit Albert Place II, it's evident that this is a neighborhood built on hope, friendship and love.

Whether it's the vibrant chalk art on the sidewalks or the shared conversation in common areas, there's more to the 29 units than just a roof for the families and seniors that call it home.

"It's all about mixed generations here," said Wade Weston, assistant housing manager with the Canadian Mental Health Association Vernon and District, which operates Albert Place II.

"Not only do they share the space, but the children keep our seniors young, and the families learn from the experiences the seniors provide."



Some of that relationship building occurs around the playground, while others take root in the community gardens.

Not only do the gardens provide fresh vegetables, but there is something therapeutic about feeling the soil between your fingers. Accomplishment comes from harvesting something you grew. Wade takes a lot of pride in seeing how the residents have embraced gardening. "We set them up with tools and they run with it." Wade said.

Albert Place II officially opened in October 2022 and it's the final building at the Albert Place complex, which includes the existing 18-unit apartment building on 25th Avenue.

Monthly rents for the one to four-bedroom units range from \$420 to \$1,676 a month, depending on unit size and tenant income. Some of the units are rented to individuals or families with very low incomes, such as those receiving income assistance. Others are for those with low or moderate incomes.



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Stories of Compassion.

At a time when the cost of housing creates significant barriers for many, Albert Place II has made a difference in the lives of its residents.

“People are very appreciative and happy for where they are. They recognize CMHA’s efforts when it comes to housing affordability and that is great,” said Wade.

Albert Place II is a partnership between the Province of B.C., the City of Vernon and the Canadian Mental Health Association Vernon and District.

Wade is confident that Albert Place II is providing individuals and families with a sense of community and safe, affordable housing while allowing them to plan ahead.



“We like success stories here. People can save money towards a down payment or put their kids through school. They have an opportunity to set themselves up for the future,” Wade Weston.

Impact Through Compassion

The Crisis Intervention and Prevention team works in suicide prevention every day through the crisis lines but what others may not realize is that suicide prevention is interwoven in all that we do. Care to Speak peers and staff are trained to watch for red flags and listen for queues in their peer service users who may just need that extra support. Good morning volunteers work with a vulnerable senior population whose troubles put them at risk of wanting to end their lives. The risk assessment skills of the operations team cascade into the work of the volunteers, supporting them in being equipped to be hyper aware of those at risk.



“Suicide prevention is interwoven in all that we do.” - Emily Hollenbach, Director of Crisis Intervention & Prevention



Stories of Compassion.

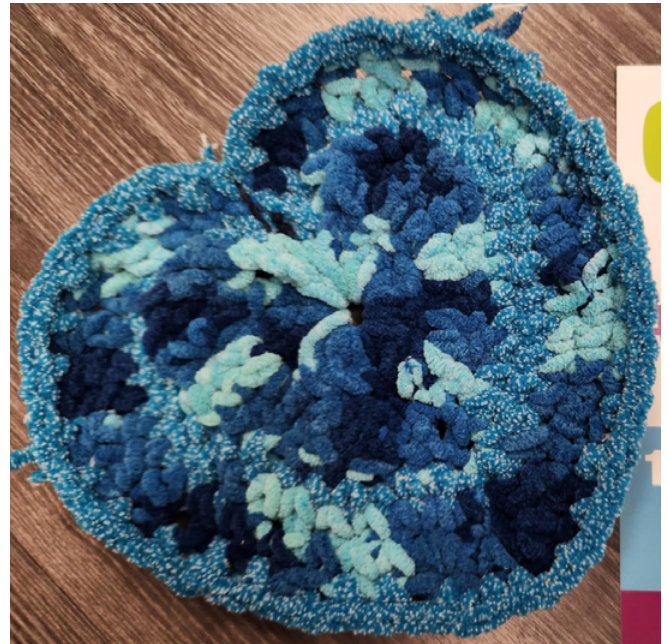
Impact Through Compassion

Continued

Often unknown to others, folks reach out weeks after losing a loved one to suicide seeking information regarding the Suicide Grief Support Group. Currently, this group runs twice a year in the spring and fall. We aim to never leave someone feeling like they have come to the wrong door, or make people wait for an upcoming session when they are in a crisis moment.

Attendees of the support group reflect upon coming into the group feeling scared and alone and leaving with a sense of belonging and new connection. An individual disclosed that their pain was so unbearable that they had considered taking their own life. After attending the group, they were able to start the work towards learning to live with their grief.

The biggest impact in recent times would be the attainment of funding for the Youth Suicide Grief Support Group. This idea was born after facilitators watched adult participants struggle to work with their own grief as it was made even more complex by the innate fear for the future of their children. They would ask questions that could not be answered like *“Tell me that my kids will be ok?”*. *“How can I help my kids?”*.



In the space where the sessions are held is a crocheted heart. This heart is made up of the strings that have connected each cohort of the Suicide Grief Support Groups. At the beginning of a cohort, the participants join a piece of string that symbolizes their circle of trust and the connection that will bind them. After the sessions end, that circle is crocheted into a heart for the future groups to see.

Each time the heart grows, we see the symbolism of the strengthening of our community knowing how many lives have been connected and ultimately, saved.



The Year at a Glance



Nutrition program

Total Meals - 5516



Education Programs

Adult Education - 441
Youth Education - 1322



Recreation Programs

Participants: 1 448



Intakes

Total - 157

Links to Employment

Persons Served - 18



Work BC

Persons Served - 41



Good Morning Program

Volunteers - 9
Participants - 34
Number of Calls - 8 623



Georgette

Volunteer hours:
5 800

Care to Speak

Volunteers - 18
Total Interactions - 529



Crisis Line

Calls Answered - 14 119
Number of Responders - 50

Peer Support

Number of Hours - 2 692
Total Connections - 194



Family Support

Hours of Direct Support - 1 184
New Clients - 252



Restorative Justice
Referrals - 14
People Served - 688
Agreements Closed - 27

Trans Peer Support

Hours of Connection - 219
Total Connected - 124
Number of Volunteers - 11



We serve the community that brings us together.
Thank you to everyone for a wonderful year.



Gratitude overflows at CMHA Vernon.

We can't do this without our many donors and sponsors.

One page is not enough to show them all



Whether you're having a bad day or your worst day, no matter what day or time, there is always someone who can help and listen.



The Interior Crisis Line Network - 1 888 353 2273 (24/7)

Interior Crisis Chat - www.interiorcrisisline.com/crisischat

Provincial Mental Health Line - 310 6789 (no area code needed)

Provincial Suicide Line - 1 800 784 2433 (24/7)

Talk Suicide Canada - 1 833 456 4566 (24/7)

Care to Speak - 1 866 802 7337 (Call or Text Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m.)

Care to Speak - www.caretospeak.ca



CMHA Vernon has been Accredited through Imagine Canada's Standards Program.

The program awards accreditation to charities and non-profits that demonstrate excellence in five fundamental areas: Board governance, Financial accountability & transparency, Fundraising, Staff management, Volunteer involvement.



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