

THE ROAD AHEAD

“RETURNING TO NORMAL IS NOT AN OPTION. AND IT’S SCARY TO SEE THAT.”

BC’s recovery and resiliency depends on charities doing their part. Mebrat Beyene of WISH Drop-In Centre Society talks about how Vancouver Foundation supported community through the first wave. P.10

WHAT COMES
NEXT P.26

GIVING TOGETHER
as a FAMILY P.22

The HEART
of BLACK
COMMUNITIES P.20



Call & Response

By STACEY McLACHLAN

WHEN VANCOUVER FOUNDATION'S leadership team gathered in President and CEO Kevin McCort's office on March 16, they had no idea it would be their last time in the same room. The executives had exchanged increasingly alarmed emails all weekend: Dr. Bonnie Henry just announced BC's 73rd case of COVID-19. What exactly would — or should — come next?

As a community foundation, the team's thoughts turned to how non-profits would make it. "We've got a specific mandate to support the community," says Dara Parker, vice-president of grants and community initiatives. "We asked ourselves: How can we do this best in a time of deep need?"

They knew they had to get money out into the community — fast. "We didn't know what shape or form, but we knew it had to come together quickly," says Craig Hikida, vice-president of donor services.

They quickly allocated a million dollars to seed some sort of aid, but if they were going to pull this off, they'd need help: partners. Big partners. So McCort picked up the phone. In a matter of days, Vancity committed a million more, United Way of the Lower Mainland chipped in \$500,000, and the City of Vancouver was eagerly contributing knowledge and charity resources. Meanwhile, Parker's team was pulling together a granting model and recruiting advisors to help determine where the need was greatest. The finance team was "shaking the couch cushions," repurposing funds from other initiatives. Long-time donors unlocked hundreds of thousands of dollars from their funds at Vancouver Foundation.

As staff transitioned to working from home, their hustle continued. By the end of the week, they performed a veritable miracle: cutting the first cheque from the brand-new Community Response Fund (CRF).



A new application process allowed for nimbleness: just two simple questions and contact information. A typical grant cycle usually takes six months to a year. But in response to the pandemic, \$19.2 million was distributed in three months. "It was like building a bike while riding it," says Parker. With a rolling deadline, the team immediately started making decisions with community advisors from across the province, who were adjudicating two or three times a week.

The CRF supported everything from health and social services, to arts and culture, offering necessary coverage between the early days of the pandemic and government relief. "We launched before rent relief, we launched before CERB," says McCort. "We have no illusion that we're replacing public support, but we did get to provide an essential bridge."

The pandemic isn't over, but the initial panic has eased. "We can't stem the global crisis. But we can show folks we have their back," says Parker. "We're an enduring institution, we will be here even in times of crisis. We're in this together."



We Are One is a mural by Marina Ross in Gastown.

VANCOUVER FOUNDATION EXECUTIVES

PRESIDENT & CEO Kevin M^cCort
VP FINANCE & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
 Emily Thorner
VP GRANTS & COMMUNITY INITIATIVES
 Dara Parker
VP DONOR SERVICES Craig Hikida
VP INVESTMENTS Eugene Lee

**VANCOUVER FOUNDATION
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Tom Shepansky, *Chair*
 Rita Andreone
 Helen Blackburn
 David Christopher
 Brenda Eaton
 Joe Gallagher
 Dr. Alexandra Greenhill
 Branislav Henselmann
 Chief Justice
 Christopher Hinkson
 Sarah Sidhu
 Eric Watt

PUBLISHER Glenn Ewald

PROJECT MANAGER Esther Tung

EDITOR Esther Tung

COPY EDITOR Tonya Martin

ART DIRECTOR Alice Cho

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
 Sasha Dryden, Meera Eragoda,
 Jenny Lee-Leugner,
 Stacey McLachlan, Esther Tung

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS
 Claudette Carracedo,
 Vincent L. Chan, Marina Dodis,
 Kayla Isomura

This magazine is
 published annually by
 Vancouver Foundation

Suite 200 – 475 West Georgia
 Street, Vancouver BC V6B 4M9
 Tel: 604.688.2204

Email:
 info@vancouverfoundation.ca
 www.vancouverfoundation.ca

Charitable Registration No.
 119281640RR0001

ON THE COVER:

Mebrat Beyene is the
 executive director of WISH
 Drop-In Centre Society.
 Story on P.10.
 Photograph by Marina Dodis.



4

IN THIS ISSUE
 2020 Volume 13

- 2 *Call & Response*
- 4 *A Road to Recovery*
- 6 *Stepping Up for Charities:*
Interviews with Vancity
& United Way of the
Lower Mainland
- 8 *Prescribing Compassion:*
Healthcare workers are
in our hearts
- 9 *On the Island:*
Tofino rallied together
during COVID-19



8

10
COMMUNITY INSPIRED
*Who decides where
 Vancouver Foundation's
 emergency response
 grants go?*

14
ART AND ACCESS
*Kickstart Disability
 reminds BC why art and
 access matter*

16
IN BLOOM
*Early COVID-19 response
 funding was crucial to
 keeping Bloom Group's
 community safe*



13

19 *When Uncertainty
 Sparks Innovation:*
 How two organizations
 pivoted in the face of
 COVID-19

20 *Hogan's Alley Society:*
 A Black community
 in focus

21 *From Across the Pond:*
 A Hong Kong-based
 foundation that
 supported Vancouver
 charities

23 *Honouring His Memory:*
 Supporting pandemic
 response with a
 memorial fund

24 *Supporting Refugees:*
 Addressing barriers
 worsened by a global
 crisis

25 *Precarious Futures:*
 The critical need of
 charities in the face
 of a pandemic



20

The ROAD to RECOVERY

By JENNY LEE-LEUGNER

The Community Response Fund (CRF) brought immediate relief to charities and non-profits working hard to respond to urgent needs and keep their doors open. Here are some of the organizations the CRF supported that will play critical roles in our province's recovery:

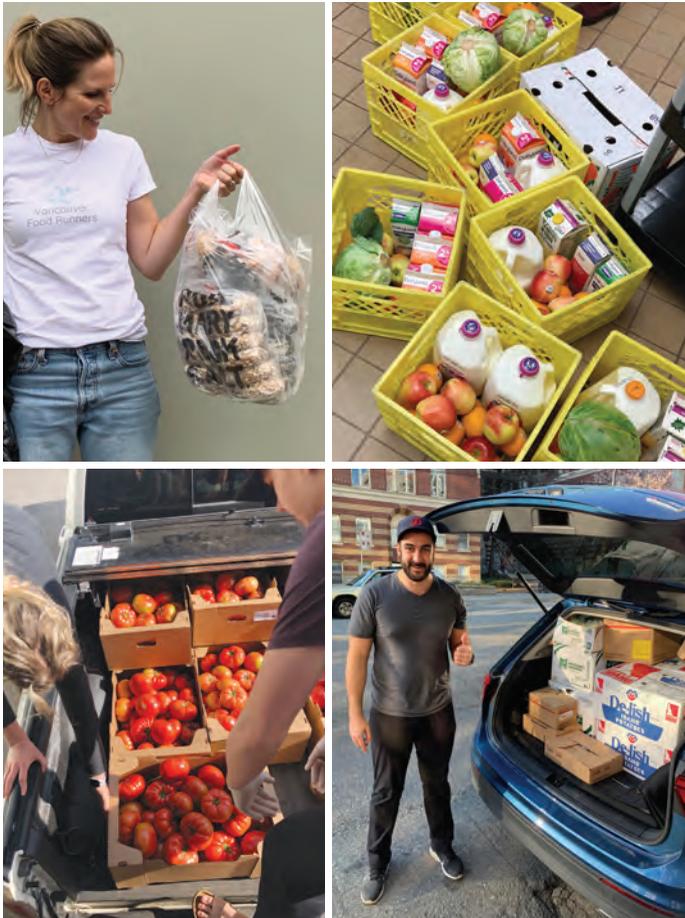


Collingwood House

Photograph by KAYLA ISOMURA

Neighbourhood houses are the cornerstone for community. They are a safe space and place for anyone to gather, share, and connect. So during the first few weeks of the lockdown, Collingwood Neighbourhood House found ways to fulfill this role even when gathering was not an option. Staff regularly checked in with seniors, food hampers were organized for families, and programs were adapted — all to ensure the Renfrew-Collingwood neighbourhood was safe, connected, and healthy. “When we talk about the work we do every day, we talk about our programs, services, and initiatives. But what we’re really doing is we’re forming relationships with people in our neighbourhood,” says Executive Director Jennifer Gray-Grant. “This is a place where people feel a sense of belonging — that’s what we’re really continuing to build.”

↑ Jennifer Gray-Grant, executive director of Collingwood Neighbourhood Houses, assembles food hampers for families.



VANCOUVER FOOD RUNNERS

When food banks became overwhelmed by demand, Vancouver Food Runners (VFR) answered the call. Food insecurity is one of the biggest issues for people since the start of the pandemic.

VFR aims to address hunger and minimize food waste by matching food donations with charities. A grant from the CRF sped up the launch of their mobile app, which they use to facilitate donation deliveries by volunteers. Because of this, even fresh food like milk and produce can be donated in time. Since March of this year, more than 99,000 VFR meals have been directed to community.

“People have come together. It’s the silver lining of COVID-19,” says Tristan Jagger, VFR’s founder and executive director. “Now charities can ensure their communities aren’t left hungry and suppliers know their donations go where it’s needed.”

THE CRF
SUPPORTED

509

CHARITIES

THE CRF
GRANTED OUT

\$17.4
MILLION

VANCOUVER
FOUNDATION
CONTRIBUTED

\$10
MILLION
TO THE CRF

Dawson Creek Art Gallery

Rural arts and culture groups like Dawson Creek Art Gallery have the power to bring community together in times of crisis.

“The role of the gallery had been reversed in a way. The gallery always receives support from our community,” says Executive Director Marsha Stewart. “It’s now our chance to use art to support them.”

With a CRF grant, the gallery sent art packages to youth across the Peace River Regional District to encourage creativity and fun, while taking the pressure off caregivers. One activity asked them to write a letter to a local farmer to support them through what has also been a difficult year for farming. When community moves through a crisis together, it is the memories of that camaraderie that have a lasting impact.



A United Front

By ESTHER TUNG Photograph by VINCENT L. CHAN

“THERE’S A SENSE of pride in being able to respond quickly, collaboratively, and meaningfully,” says Michael McKnight, president and CEO of United Way of the Lower Mainland (UWLM), as he reflects on the early days of the organization’s pandemic response.

UWLM first mobilized support for neighbours to help each other and set up food hubs to meet the critical need for food security. UWLM also seeded the Community Response Fund (CRF) with half a million dollars to provide immediate relief to charities on the front lines.

“It’s very appropriate that iconic, community-based organizations were the first ones to step up,” McKnight says, referring to the partnership between Vancouver Foundation and Vancity, along with the City of Vancouver. “The CRF gave donors a place to go right away, with a sense of trust in the organizations involved.”

Though some might consider United Way and Vancouver Foundation as competitors, McKnight sees it differently. “Everyone saw a critical need for the CRF and wanted to be a part of this collaboration of community leadership,” McKnight says. “We’re known for our history of being collaborators. So, when Vancouver Foundation reached out, it wasn’t a question of, ‘Should we?’ but ‘What can we mobilize now?’”

McKnight sees great potential for the legacy of the CRF as “a template for responding to future emergencies.” He alludes to the “Big One” as an example — the 9.0 magnitude earthquake that experts say is due to hit the West Coast. “We’ve worked through so many of the pieces that we could draw from to be even more responsive when we should face this next crisis in our community.”



Michael McKnight is the president and CEO of United Way of the Lower Mainland.



Community Knows Best

By ESTHER TUNG

TRUST IS ONE of the core guiding principles of Vancouver Foundation’s grants from the Community Response Fund (CRF). “The people requesting money from the fund — they know community. They know what they need,” says Paula Martin, advisor to the CEO at Vancity, a founding partner of the CRF.

← Paula Martin is Advisor to the CEO at Vancity.

IMAGE COURTESY OF VANCITY



VANCITY
CONTRIBUTED

\$2

MILLION

IN TOTAL
TO THE
COMMUNITY
RESPONSE
FUND

Because of this trust, charities could quickly do what they needed to accomplish in the community. CRF grants could be put to use where the need was greatest — a stark contrast from previous grants and donations that had to be tied to a specific project or purpose.

The flexibility afforded by these grants was particularly important as the pandemic affected people's most basic needs — like food and easy access to it. "People took the time to stop and write to us about how grateful they were to receive a grant that had so much flexibility, so that they could do what they needed to do for the people they serve," Martin says.

In the early days of the pandemic, food security quickly became one of the top areas of need, and it wasn't only food banks or food relief agencies trying to meet that need. Martin clearly remembers an application from a Surrey-based arts organization that

required funding to ensure the artists they worked with would be able to eat. Supporting artists was their mission, and the pandemic meant a shift in priorities.

As the largest credit union in Canada, Vancity's \$2 million contribution to the CRF was only a small part of their overall impact on British Columbia businesses and charities. Vancity also launched the Unity Term Deposit, an investment account with a guaranteed return rate, and raised \$200 million in less than a month, which was then made available as business and not-for-profit loans.

The success of its programs heavily relies on how well Vancity understands community. "Each of the CRF partners has a well-honed view of community need based on decades and decades of working directly in community," Martin says. "Our business is not just about money. Our business is about supporting community."

PRESCRIBING COMPASSION

Staff at St. Paul's Hospital share their experiences supporting the community through COVID-19.

By **STACEY M^CLACHLAN**

Photographs by **CLAUDETTE CARRACEDO**



← **LAURA FINKLER-KEMENY** is a registered nurse. “We’re managing something that bears little standardized information, and ultimately it’s up to our individual best judgment.”



→ **DR. JOSEPH FINKLER** is concerned with the lack of warmth at the hospital. He’s noticed that people have their guards up more since the pandemic began. “There’s less joking around, less camaraderie. It’s a little alienating and cold.”

Healthcare Workers Support Food Banks

By **STACEY M^CLACHLAN**

THIS SPRING, the BC Nurses Union (BCNU) put the income from its Vancouver Foundation endowment fund not towards hospital equipment or emergency room supplies, but towards the Vancouver Food Bank. “We were concerned about thousands of people who were suddenly out of work following public-health orders that shut down non-essential economic activity,” says Christine Sorensen, president of the BC Nurses Union. “For many who lost their income, food insecurity became a real thing.”

And so, the BCNU made a call for members to donate. They wound up

collecting \$10,000 between April and mid-May, all of which went to support families in need.

Charitable funds like the BCNU endowment fund help support people in difficult times — a chance for frontline workers to create the communities they want to see in the city.

“Beyond the material support, this fund is making a difference in the mindset of our members,” says Sorensen. “The fund furthers our commitment to address social determinants that are the foundation of healthy and resilient communities. And that’s a good feeling.”

ON THE ISLAND

By **SASHA DRYDEN**

Photographs by **MARINA DODIS**

IN THE HEART of Tofino, Clayoquot Biosphere Trust (CBT) rallied quickly to support their community when COVID-19 changed everyone's lives. With physical distancing measures in place, busy summer events — and the annual influx of eco-tourists who help support ecological research and stewardship initiatives — wouldn't be possible.

"One of the first steps CBT took was to convene weekly meetings with the executive directors of our grantees," says Executive Director Rebecca Hurwitz. CBT networked groups of organizations as they pivoted to offer online-learning programs, even hiring a local organization to offer grantees a short filmmaking course at no cost.

When Vancouver Foundation came forward in May with special funding for community foundations in British Columbia, CBT used its grant to create a matching program that raised more than \$15,000 in donations and supported 10 local organizations. "I think that's the first collaborative fundraising campaign in our region," says Hurwitz.

At the same time, CBT's Responsive Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) program ramped up to support projects that strengthened local communities, turning around approvals for funding every two weeks.

↓
Learn about some Neighbourhood Small Grants projects on P.25.

"Not just a little review, but 'Does that meet public health guidelines, is it going to be safe?'" says Brooke Wood,

CBT's outreach coordinator. The committee applied the principle that "all ideas are good ideas," which meant that a project teaching bicycle repair over Zoom and a pom-pom-poodle-crafting project for families with small children were supported alongside a free store providing clothes and household items.

"A little goes a long way with this program. The overall need was connection to fight social isolation during COVID."

As winter approaches, Wood is focused on the NSG committee and project leaders, "They're having to do so much more than they ever have before."

Hurwitz is also building on the summer momentum. "The ability to support COVID response with so much flexibility allowed CBT to build on what we've already implemented. As a partner, Vancouver Foundation really has made such a positive impact in our region."



↑ Clayoquot Biosphere Trust Executive Director, Rebecca Hurwitz (top) and Outreach Coordinator Brooke Wood.



Community Inspired

*Behind the Scenes of the
Community Response Fund*

Photographs by MARINA DODIS



“I

T'S PROFOUND HOW quickly funders can pivot when there's a will and a need," Mebrat Beyene says as she remembers the long hours helping charities keep their doors open by answering requests for emergency funding.

Several days a week, she met with a team of community leaders to review applications for funding from Vancouver Foundation's Community Response Fund (CRF).

One of the reasons Beyene was eager to volunteer with this committee was to offer her

expertise on the complex and evolving pain points in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. Beyene is the executive director at WISH Drop-In Centre Society, which supports women in Vancouver's street-based sex trade.

The CRF launched on March 18, just one day after a public health emergency was declared in British Columbia, with its first \$3 million seeded by individual donors and founding partners Vancouver Foundation, Vancity, and United Way of the Lower Mainland.

The CRF's first focus was supporting charities in health and social services working →



Mebrat Beyene,
executive director
of WISH Drop-In
Centre Society.



Eastside Culture
Crawl Society's
Artistic and
Executive Director,
Esther Rausenberg.

“In times of crisis, it’s human nature to want to be part of the solution,”

—Tom Shepansky, Vancouver Foundation’s Board Chair →



on the frontlines with people who were disproportionately impacted by COVID-19 and its economic consequences. Shortly after, the CRF expanded to support organizations that promoted community recovery and resiliency, such as the arts.

Eastside Culture Crawl Society’s Artistic and Executive Director, Esther Rausenberg, was also a CRF advisor, and saw a role for herself in advocating for the arts. “It sets an example for others to come on board and look at what happens if we don’t support the arts. The community would be decimated.”

Core to ensuring the CRF was effective was making the process nimble. “Money was being raised as quickly as the committee was allocating it,” says Beyene. Charities could use the emergency funding for anything they wanted — a welcome freedom that has enabled many to adapt to the evolving need that the crisis presented. This no-strings-attached funding helped to bridge a crucial gap early in the pandemic, though a long road lies ahead for many charities, organizations, and non-profits.

Vancouver Foundation relies on advisors like Beyene and Rausenberg to ensure that its funding priorities are in touch with what is happening on the ground. “The heart and soul

of Vancouver Foundation is really the granting process and the engagement of the committee members,” says Tom Shepansky, Vancouver Foundation’s board chair and CRF advisor.

Vancouver Foundation’s pandemic response grant committees allocated \$19.2 million in three months — an unprecedented granting feat at Vancouver Foundation. “We processed more applications at the beginning of COVID-19 than what they normally do in two years,” Rausenberg says.

Though many volunteer advisors were also experiencing personal hardships as a result of the pandemic, Shepansky says they also demonstrated admirable commitment, collaboration, and compassion.

“In times of crisis, it’s human nature to want to be part of the solution,” says Shepansky. ↻

A COMMUNITY BRAINTRUST

Meet some of the experts in community that advise Vancouver Foundation on where funding needs to go next.

By MEERA ERAGODA Photographs by MARINA DODIS



Shagufta Pasta

Equitable philanthropy has always been an area of fascination for Shagufta Pasta, an advisor on Vancouver Foundation's Systems Change granting committee. As the interview unfolds, she shares her history of critical thinking on systems that aim to provide change.

For Pasta, being a racialized, visibly Muslim woman on the committee provides both a lens in understanding what a project would look like "on the ground" and signals to people in the community that they are represented. Pasta says this can make the Systems Change grants feel more within reach than another grant program with a less diverse set of advisors.

Pasta adds, "Amalgamating all of our expertise helps the alchemy of philanthropy happen."



Am Johal

Serving on Vancouver Foundation's CRF grant committee, Am Johal was able to use his connections with community organizers, some of which go back two decades. Johal sits on various boards, has previously worked in the Downtown Eastside, and has also worked with various levels of government.

These relationships have a twofold benefit: 1) During committee meetings, it enabled Johal to maintain a dialogue about frontline needs; 2) Johal was able to ensure that his networks knew funding was available to those who needed it most.

"When an emergency unfolds, our network of civil-society organizations tend to start doing the work of triage on the frontlines. They don't necessarily have the time to look around for new funding streams," says Johal.



Elena Yugai

As an expert in impact investing, Elena Yugai is well-versed in the "full cycle of an organization." Bringing this experience to serving on the Systems Change granting committee allows Yugai to evaluate how best to support projects, add social value, while ensuring financial stability.

Complementing this expertise, Yugai draws on her personal experience as an immigrant navigating unfamiliar systems, and then uses this knowledge when reviewing applications aiming to serve newcomers to Canada.

Yugai also spent time volunteering with immigrants — particularly women — and her goal is to provide "perspective on how [organizational] work might impact newcomers and women."



Kait Blake is
Kickstart Disability
Arts & Culture's
administrative
director.

Physical distancing has forced many arts and culture events online. For some, it's made events more accessible.

By **SASHA DRYDEN**
Photograph by
MARINA DODIS

ART and ACCESS

KICKSTART DISABILITY ARTS & CULTURE has been producing the KickstART Festival to present authentic, non-sentimental expressions of disability experience since 2001. In 2014, their board and staff voted to shift to more continuous annual programming.

In 2020, it was time to shift again, and with a Community Response Grant from Vancouver Foundation, the organization was able to launch *Still, Life: A Digital Festival*, their first online disability arts festival. “The festival came out of the need to adapt our programming due to the pandemic,” says Administrative Director Kait Blake.

Kickstart quickly pivoted their programming to a digital platform. “Diversity, equity, inclusion were themes considered when curating the programming, and all of the artists involved were chosen with that in mind,” explains Blake.

The breadth of the programming over the five-day event was ambitious. Deaf *Cirque du Soleil* performer Maxim Fomitchev led a movement session, Indigenous Women Rise Drum Group guided a drum-circle workshop, and there was also a screening of Salome Chasnoff’s *Code of the Freaks*, a documentary that reframes the use of disabled characters in film. Sessions on essential business skills and artistic practice formed the backbone of the festival, with discussions on grant applications, art law, and writing disabled characters.

With more than 270 registrants, the festival was a success by any measure. “The reach of the festival was just amazing! We had people from all over Canada, and even the US, which is really exciting for us. Generally, our reach is the Lower Mainland and BC,” says Blake.

MAKING DIGITAL ACCESSIBLE

One silver lining of the pandemic has been expanded access to artistic and cultural events programming for many people with disabilities. “One of our board members, who lives in Victoria and uses a mobility device, said she’s never felt more connected and able to participate in so many artistic endeavors,” Blake shares.

So for now, Kickstart is taking all future events online. “We have to keep in mind that our community is considered vulnerable health-wise. Even as the province opens up, many folks in our community aren’t reintegrating themselves. As a small organization, digital is much more in our capacity, which is another benefit.”

However, the shift to a digital platform isn’t the answer to everyone’s needs. “Digital programming certainly introduced new barriers that you wouldn’t experience with in-person programming,” says Blake. “We’re thinking about how to reach those folks who may not have access to computers and internet.”

Another barrier Blake has noticed is that many online events do not have American Sign Language interpretation or closed captioning.

To that end, Kickstart Disability hopes for more inclusion from organizations shifting to digital. “How do we continue to engage those parts of the population while still social distancing? Moving forward, I’m hoping other organizations and presenters will keep this in mind.”

“One of our board members, who lives in Victoria and uses a mobility device, said she’s never felt more connected and able to participate in so many artistic endeavors.”

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US

Kait Blake also advised on Vancouver Foundation’s CRF grants that supported arts, culture, and community benefit organizations. Blake contributed her inclusive perspective when advising on funding for Vancouver Foundation’s CRF grants. “Vancouver Foundation inviting me was wonderful because this is the first time Kickstart has been invited to participate on a committee. They really relied on my expertise within this.”

She’s firm that people with disabilities should continue to be involved “Nobody should be making those decisions for our community; our community should be making those decisions.”

As someone living with intersectional disabilities, working with Kickstart has been an eye-opening experience for Blake. “No matter where I go, I’m aware of access. I think we need more people to think that way. I don’t think it’s intentional, it’s just an afterthought.”

She was pleased to see many of the CRF applications were factoring in accessibility. “It was very interesting to see the willingness of so many organizations to make that shift and make it as quickly as possible.” ☺



Liz Barnett is
Bloom Group's
executive director.

IN BLOOM

By STACEY M^cLACHLAN
Photographs by
CLAUDETTE CARRACEDO

*Lightning-quick funding gave the Bloom Group
a chance to do what they do best: help.*

LIZ BARNETT HAS SEEN IT ALL

in her 30 years working in non-profits. She worked through Y2K and 9/11. She's been facing the horrific realities of the opioid crisis every day for years.

Then, along came COVID-19. And she found herself frozen inside of her car.

The week things got serious, "I would just sit in my car, just in shock," recalls the executive director of the Bloom Group Community Services Society. Her team, which annually serves over 2,000 residents, patients, and clients with housing and social services, was similarly overwhelmed.

The Bloom Group is located in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, and serves people whose lives are already challenging. Their clients might be fleeing an abusive situation, or struggling with substance dependence; some are at-risk seniors in need of housing, others are living with mental illness and looking for support. "We're here to fill in the gaps," explains Barnett. Resources were already stretched thin, and the demands and pressures already high. And now, on top of it all, a global health crisis had taken hold.

The implications on Bloom's vulnerable community were staggering. There were the physical dangers of the disease, of course — infection, transmission, death — but also the logistical ones. Grocery stores were shutting down: people couldn't get food. Layoffs were swift. Community centres — an important space for the homeless to clean up or use the washroom or simply wash their hands — closed. Personal protection equipment (PPE) was impossible to find.

But then: the phone rang. And on the end of the line was Vancouver Foundation, asking if funding from the new Community Response Fund (CRF) would be helpful. Yes, said Barnett. Yes, it would.

She answered a couple of questions, and less than a week later, Bloom Group's bank account was \$50,000 richer. The best part? The Bloom Group could use that money however it saw fit. This was a unique cash infusion — one that also offered empowerment. After all, as the Vancouver Foundation board points out, the community knows best what the community needs.

Barnett got out of her car, and got to work.

First on the docket for funding was Bloom's Healthy Meals program, which delivers hot meals to members of the community. With shops and restaurants closed, the access to →

something to eat was critical. “We thought about getting people coupons, but there literally wasn’t anywhere to go,” notes Barnett.

One tenant, an at-risk senior who’s a little frail now that he’s in his 70s, normally relies on the food bank and the bus. He’s one of the many Bloom clients who Barnett knows the Healthy Meals program impacted on multiple levels. “To be able to receive a hot meal delivered to his door, a beautiful meal, I know that made a difference in his physical and mental health,” says Barnett. “A healthy meal is a way to say ‘someone cares.’”

It’s not the only way Bloom used the CRF to offer compassion to its community. Along with affordable housing, the organization operates a hospice with 16 beds. Under the COVID-19 lockdown, the rules around visitors quickly changed, and Barnett found her team scrambling to still provide comfort for their residents, even if all of their loved ones couldn’t be there for their last days. With the help of the CRF, they were able to do that...materially at least. Sixteen specialized mattresses were purchased: a small gesture that meant the world.

The last chunk of the CRF money was used to offer support in a more practical — but crucially important — way.

“[THIS GRANT FROM VANCOUVER FOUNDATION] WAS A REMINDER: THE COMMUNITY DOES LOVE US. THEY REMEMBERED.”

If an order of 5,000 gloves comes in, they’re now tracked and shelved in a new mini-warehouse area. Nothing is lost, nothing is hoarded. It’s a gift for managers pulling triple shifts to have one less thing to worry about. “It might sound funny to pay for shelving,” says Barnett, “but [PPE] keeps our 250 staff safe, which keeps their families safe.”

As the first recipient of the CRF, Barnett is still marveling at how quickly Vancouver Foundation and Bloom were able to get \$50,000 out into the community. But it’s not just about the money, she says: it was about the “grace and support” that the helping hand represented.

“There is so much negative stuff said about this neighbourhood; a lot of people just don’t understand. But this call was a reminder: the community does love us. They remembered.” ∞

Bloom tracks and store protective supplies like masks and gloves in a mini-warehouse environment to make things easier for staff.



When Uncertainty Sparks Innovation

By JENNY LEE-LEUGNER

Despite the new challenges posed by COVID-19, charities and non-profits have proven that innovation is possible through sheer determination and a strong commitment to community. And with support from the Community Response Fund (CRF), they were able to stay in motion and start rebuilding for the future.



together down the line. While the project may have begun as an immediate response to information needs, it's now laid the groundwork for addressing other pressing issues that will have a long-term effect on community resiliency.

GABRIOLA ARTS COUNCIL

THIS URGENCY OF finding new ways of supporting community during the pandemic was also felt on Gabriola Island, which houses one of the largest concentrations of artists in Canada.

“Art is a vehicle for how people come together, especially in rural communities,” says Carol Fergusson, executive director of Gabriola Arts Council (GAC), a non-profit supporting the arts on Gabriola. “People know the artists. They’re neighbours, they see each other at the grocery store or coffee shop. Art is what’s going to get us through this.”

GAC’s biggest pivot was moving their annual flagship event, the Thanksgiving Studio Tour, online. Usually, people can visit up to 90 artists in-studio as they showcase their work. This year, artists will be featured along with a 360-degree view of their studios. Once the virtual version of the tour is over, GAC intends to keep the platform as a permanent initiative to continue to virtually promote artists.

HUA FOUNDATION

HUA FOUNDATION EMPOWERS youth from the East Asian diaspora to advance social change. When the pandemic first began, hua foundation joined the C19 Response Coalition to translate the most up-to-date information about COVID-19 from credible sources (the poster pictured above is one such product created by the coalition).

This included the province’s restart plan and emergency financial support options. A grant from the CRF enabled them to expand this initiative to include Tagalog and Vietnamese languages.

“There’s a gap in community around information and understanding of what’s going on,” says Kevin Huang, co-founder and executive director of hua foundation.

As anti-Asian sentiment spiked, the coalition saw an opportunity to build solidarity between Asian communities with the hopes of tackling anti-racism work





HOGAN'S ALLEY: The Heart of Black Vancouver

Photograph by VINCENT L. CHAN

AS SOCIETY GRAPPLES with the work of dismantling racist systems, new paths for healing are being formed through grassroots organizations that serve Black communities. Hogan's Alley Society (HAS) is one of several Black-led organizations harnessing the most recent wave of support for racial justice.

Based in the historically Black neighbourhood of Hogan's Alley, HAS "advocates for Black Vancouverites who have endured the legacies of urban renewal and their erasure from the official historical narrative."

Currently, HAS serves its community at Nora Hendrix Place, a temporary modular housing development operated in partnership with PHS Community Services Society (PHS). PHS act as property managers while HAS provides programming tailored to the needs of the Black community.

One stand-out is the hamper program spearheaded by Siobhan Barker, an experienced food-justice advocate. When assembling food hampers for the residents of Nora Hendrix Place, Barker focuses on foods she describes as "culturally significant" and "nurturing in spirit and body." This means fresh produce plucked from HAS's community garden or farmed by other local, Black-led organizations.

When COVID-19 hit, HAS had to adapt. Physical distancing guidelines made it harder to offer direct support to the residents. This was compounded by the fact that many of them did not have mobile phones. In partnership with national telecom companies, HAS secured 50 smartphones and SIM cards for the residents.

HAS also used an emergency grant from Vancouver Foundation to bolster support services to

↑ Lama Mugabo (left) and Siobhan Barker at Nora Hendrix Place.

accommodate various levels of literacy and communication styles.

Then, on May 25, police officers brutally killed George Floyd, a Black resident of Minneapolis. Protests spread across the globe in support of Black Lives Matter and racial justice. Phone calls and emails began pouring into HAS with requests for interviews and consulting services.

Though the increased visibility is welcomed, the leaders of HAS, such as board member Lama Mugabo, have found themselves working hard to serve their communities while contextualizing systemic racism for new supporters.

Mugabo sees this historical time as "an opportunity for substantive change," but acknowledges the roadblocks. Many Black-led organizations struggle to meet the criteria for many grants. "The carrot is being dangled, but we can't meet the basic requirements," he says. "Please ask us what we need, don't tell us what you are going to give us. We are going to fall through the cracks. Systemic racism has done us badly. You have to meet us where we are."

FROM ACROSS THE POND

By SASHA DRYDEN

↓ Youth volunteers help give out gift packs to seniors in Hong Kong.



THOUGH HEADQUARTERED IN Hong Kong, the Simon K. Y. Lee Foundation has strong roots in Vancouver. In 2015, the Lee family established a donor advised fund with Vancouver Foundation in order to tap into their knowledge of the community’s needs.

Edwin Lee, a board member at Simon K.Y. Lee Foundation, describes a deep trust in Vancouver Foundation’s grant expertise — so much so that when the Simon K.Y. Lee Foundation launched a new initiative inspired by Vancouver Foundation’s Community Response Fund (CRF), they used their grant-

ing principles as a template.

“Especially nimbleness — we understand that we need to act quickly given the urgency of the crisis. The CRF has been a good example to follow,” Lee says.

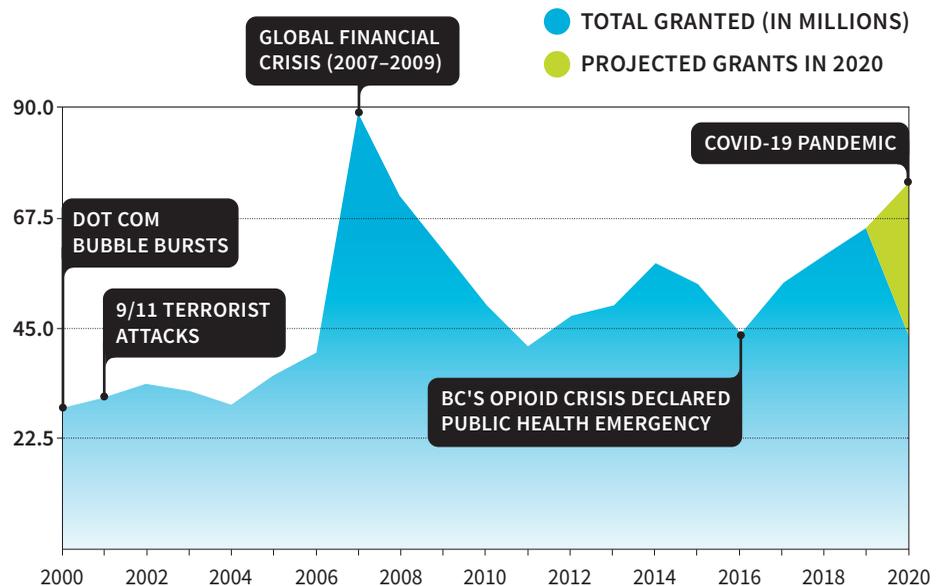
When COVID-19 hit, the two foundations kicked off a partnership in a matter of days. Eager to make an immediate contribution to charities offering critical services to British Columbians, the Simon K.Y. Lee Foundation made a \$100,000 gift to the CRF. In one day, the gift was matched in full by other Vancouver Foundation donors, doubling its impact.

The Simon K.Y. Lee Foundation’s focus in years past has been on systems change projects that address the root causes of pressing issues. “We want to fund innovative projects that are proven to be effective and help scale them up so that more people can benefit.”

But with their focus on getting help where needed quickly in both Hong Kong and Vancouver, the foundation must now balance the two objectives. “Though in the past we have tended to focus more on long-term impact, we recognize that COVID-19 has hit so hard and we must address more immediate short term needs.”

Through Good Times & Bad

Vancouver Foundation has always been there for BC. Expertise in financial markets and investments and deep relationships in community have enabled Vancouver Foundation to withstand and respond to crises in the past and present, and whatever may come next.





George Hutchison with his wife, Jean Hutchison.

Honouring His Memory

WHEN VANCOUVER FOUNDATION asked Lynda Hutchison to take part in a gift match supporting those hurt by the pandemic, the answer was a resounding “Yes!” For the Hutchisons, philanthropy is a family tradition.

Her father, George Hutchison, was an accountant and astute investor for whom giving back to the community was a core value. “He was big into giving back to the community where he was born and raised,” says Lynda.

Today, one of the ways Lynda keeps his memory alive is by funding charities through the George Hutchison Foundation, a donor-

advised fund established in his memory five years ago.

Before he passed away in 2012, George made his desire to have a fund established at Vancouver Foundation known to his family. He appreciated Vancouver Foundation's long-standing relationships with charities and organizations that help people in so many different ways. And now, his family is able to focus on what was most important to George: education and keeping people healthy.

“Personally, as I started to get involved, there were some [charities and organizations] that I had never heard of. It's amazing what is out there in the community,” says Lynda. “Vancouver Foundation is very enlightening in that way.”

Lynda was able to support the Community Response Fund (CRF) and challenged other donors to contribute the same amount or more. Lynda's challenge was quickly accepted by several donors.

Lynda's 16-year-old daughter also understands the importance of those who have been committed to giving back to those who may not be as fortunate. She is currently preparing for her eventual role as an advisor to the fund that honours her grandfather's legacy and continues to support, uplift, and strengthen the community as a whole.

IMAGE COURTESY OF LYNDA HUTCHISON

#InOurHearts

British Columbians took to social media to share who or what was in their hearts throughout the pandemic. Here are a few of our favourites.



Digital Signatures and Wills

By AIMÉE ARES



PRIOR TO COVID-19, for a will to be valid in British Columbia, it had to be signed by the will maker in the physical presence of two adult witnesses who also signed in the presence of one another.

On August 14, 2020, the legislation governing wills in BC (the Wills, Estates, and Succession Act) was permanently amended to legally recognize electronically signed and remotely witnessed wills.

Although these amendments are not yet in force as the accompanying regulations still need to

be drafted, the amendments will allow for electronically signed wills to be valid, as long as it was signed with both witnesses electronically present.

Some celebrate these amendments as a step forward from the antiquated tradition of ink, and they certainly are valuable for assisting people who may be immunocompromised. However, not every law firm has adopted these amendments as common practice. Westcoast Wills & Estates is one of those firms. This is for two reasons:

- ① Not all jurisdictions recognize digitally or remotely signed wills. A remote or digitally signed will may not be legally valid if a person moves away from BC.
- ② Meeting with clients in-person to sign a will is the best way for lawyers to verify their client's identity, assess testamentary capacity, and ensure that there has not been any undue influence on the person to execute the document.



Aimée Ares, lawyer at Westcoast Wills & Estates.

Many of us are now accustomed to meeting remotely, and the option of virtually planning your estate is here to stay. But even though virtual meetings are convenient and accessible, the use of electronic signatures and remote witnessing should be approached with caution and consideration.

IMAGE CREDIT: MIKE BEISHUIZEN





Supporting Refugees

Photograph by **KAYLA ISOMURA**

When any crisis occurs, it tends to heavily impact those who already face multiple barriers in society. Through grants from Vancouver Foundation’s Community Response Fund (CRF), the following three charities were able to support and stay connected to their clients, who are refugees or immigrants to Canada, as they navigate a new way of life amid a pandemic.



Amos Kambere (middle) and Umoja staff supported more than 75 families in the first months of the pandemic.

AFRICAN WOMEN'S HEALTH SERVICES SOCIETY (AWHSS)

AWHSS supports African refugee and immigrant women.

With a CRF grant, AWHSS was able to stay in touch with their members, sending gift cards, masks, and hand sanitizer. “At least they knew we were there to check on them,” explains Founder and Executive Director Jeanne-Suzanna Inabeza.

Another serious issue that some of their members faced was domestic violence, which spiked during the pandemic and is a taboo subject in African culture. So, the relationships AWHSS had developed with each of its members was especially critical. “They open up to Babyta [AWHSS coordinator] because they trust her. It’s really rare — it takes years,” says Inabeza.

HOUSE OF OMEED

House of Omeed supports Arab and Persian newcomers as they create a new life in Canada.

During the pandemic, many of their clients lost their jobs, and were afraid to advocate for government support in fear it may affect their refugee claim. A CRF grant helped House of Omeed set up a food-basket program for more than 130 families, which caters to their religious and cultural needs.

“Even though there’s a lot of stress in our community and many have given up everything to come to Canada, they still want to help each other and have a lot to offer,” says Ahmad Zeividavi, executive director.

UMOJA OPERATION COMPASSION SOCIETY

Umoja works with newcomers and refugees who live in Surrey, BC.

“Our initial feeling was that of despair,” says Executive Director Amos Kambere, when reflecting on how cancelling or moving programs online would affect their clients. “Some of them are not familiar with Zoom [or] are new here on a computer. So, it was hard.”

With a CRF grant, Umoja created “modular connect packages” for 75 families to help address isolation with items like gift cards, art supplies, games, and outdoor activities for children, as well as journals to encourage reflection.

Distanced, Not Isolated

By **JENNY LEE-LEUGNER** Photographs by **KAYLA ISOMURA**

Neighbourhood Small Grants (NSG) has always been about celebrating and strengthening community. When the pandemic challenged the way people connected, British Columbians proved that being physically distanced doesn't have to mean social isolation.

Personal Narratives for Future Generations

Everyone has a story to tell. This is the philosophy behind Vancouver resident Keiko Honda's writing project. With writing prompts that Honda offers, participants share stories of their pandemic experience with the goal of also educating future generations about the effect of a pandemic on everyday life. With seven current submissions and more on the way, Honda plans to publish some of the final pieces as a keepsake to commemorate this moment in our history. "I wanted to encourage myself and others to write about how we feel, how we act, how we thrive during these challenging times, especially the moments that have been particularly meaningful, difficult, comical, or delightful during this pandemic," says Honda.



SOCIALLY DISTANT SCAVENGER HUNT

Spending time outdoors and getting exercise has been an important way that people have coped during the pandemic. With this in mind, Rev-elstoke resident Kristen Avery used a Responsive NSG grant to organize a socially distanced scavenger hunt.

Avery posted words or a letter around the community and shared hints online on where to find them. Participants would then find all the words or the letter, solve the riddle, and share their answer with Avery, who announced the winner.

"I was just trying to provide some entertainment and an opportunity for people to get out, be active, and see different places around the community," says Avery. "People loved it, especially families who said it was fun and something different to do."



The Wanton Destruction of the Buffalo by Carnival Sized Cinnamon Hearts.

Arts in the DTES

For 10 years, Vancouver Foundation's Downtown Eastside (DTES) Small Arts Grants program has supported emerging artists who live or work in the neighbourhood. The program cancelled celebrations for its 10th anniversary, which falls during a complicated time — amid a global pandemic that has revealed how a crisis affects the community's most vulnerable residents.

"Without access to regular programs and services, people's lives include various complex barriers have been cut adrift from their regular supports," says Beverly Walker, program coordinator at Carnegie Community Centre. Walker underscores the importance of continuing to celebrate and support arts in the DTES. "For many residents of the DTES, art is a lifeline."

Precarious Futures

By MEERA ERAGODA

Vantage Point's No Immunity report highlighted the precarity facing non-profits at the start of the pandemic. Three non-profits elaborate on the continuing need for support as the future of the charitable sector hangs in the balance.



The No Immunity report found that nearly

4 IN 5

non-profits saw or anticipated a disruption in service to communities.

Still Moon Arts Society (left) joins art and nature, while Backpack Buddies (right) closes the hunger gap for BC children.

Still Moon Arts Society

Before COVID-19, Still Moon Arts Society, an organization focused on fostering art, community, and the environment, was operating on a “forward momentum,” with plans to grow and expand their programs. While this momentum afforded Still Moon some protection, Artistic Director Carmen Rosen explains that it has also thrown their future into flux.

Funding from Vancouver Foundation has been helpful in alleviating the stress of the pandemic by maintaining staff, programs, and “giving Still Moon a stable cushion...and not calling for the lifeboats.” The continuation of their programs “adds soul and meaning to people’s daily lives and counteracts social isolation.”

Canada SCORES

Canada SCORES is an afterschool program for vulnerable youth that offers soccer, poetry, and volunteer opportunities. COVID-19 closures meant they had to transition to an online platform, which has reduced access to their services.

According to Executive Director Kevin Yang, half of the youth who attend the program face barriers such as a lack of Internet access, and so can’t take part in Canada SCORES’ virtual programming. “Our program might not be delivering the same outcomes, or even reaching the same amount of people during this time. But it’s still needed.”

Yang says flexible support from Vancouver Foundation has been instrumental. “It helped to keep our doors open for sure.”

Backpack Buddies

The pandemic has caused heightened food insecurity due to school and meal-program closures. Backpack Buddies, a food distribution program created to provide children with food on weekends, went from supporting 1,300 children to providing week-long support to nearly 3,000.

Vice-President and Co-Founder Emily-Anne King explains that the funding from Vancouver Foundation was “invaluable” to reimagining their system, given their inability to safely fundraise. “[It] allowed us to increase our programming quickly, increase the amount of kids we were serving, [and] send more meals out the door than ever before.”

Despite schools reopening, the crisis is far from over with “research indicating that one in three kids in [Canada] will be food insecure this fall.”



Help charities help communities.

Many charities, and the people they serve, are at risk right now.

Funds established by our donors helped many organizations featured in this magazine get through the first months of the pandemic. With your help, Vancouver Foundation can provide stable, dependable funding for charities to do their best work.

By creating a fund at Vancouver Foundation, you can be part of the solution — now and into the future.

See how you can make a difference:

vancouverfoundation.ca/start

Ken Haycock's 100 Gay Men Who Care Fund supports LGBTQ+ charities.



Clasina van Bommel's Compassion in Action Fund supports vulnerable women and children



A generous grant helped Nanaimo District Secondary School students launch their science experiment into space with NASA.

I give to my community and with Vancouver Foundation, my giving lasts forever.

77 years ago, a single gift started
Vancouver Foundation and that gift is still
making a difference in the community today.

We can help you create a fund that gives forever.
Get started at vancouverfoundation.ca/create or
call us at 604-505-4419.

vancouver
foundation



To find your local community foundation visit communityfoundations.ca