

# access youth outreach services

2023 - 2024

ANNUAL REPORT



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# 2023 – 2024 Annual Report

## Introduction

From April 2023 through to March 2024, Access Youth Outreach Services continued to grow and deliver supportive programming to youth ages 12 to 23. Changes and new partnerships have expanded our programs, allowing us to support more youth across the TriCities. Please see a detailed account of our success by each department in the agency.

ACCESS Youth secured space for its offices and programming at no cost throughout most of the 2023 -2024 year, which was a donation-in-kind provided by supportive partners. We formed new partnerships with organizations like School District 43, the Ministry of Children and Families, the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction. Through the large scale support of donors and granters, such as The AGF Foundation Group and the City of Coquitlam, we were able to expand our programming.

The change in our finances was significant, with an increase of more than 120% in our budget. This was the result of increased corporate donations, and new connections with other organizations and agencies.

**One of our community successes this year was being recognized as the TriCities Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit of the Year, an incredible honour, and gratefully received.** We thank our nominees, and are humbled to be in the company of the other deserving nominees in the category.

Our staffing expanded, and we implemented staffing retention policies to help keep our organization stable and sustainable. Technology and software were upgraded and expanded, increasing our cyber-security.

In our Youth GourMade program, we are serving more families than ever before, and using new strategies to keep costs sustainable throughout the inflation of grocery prices. The Youth Empowerment Program took on new dimensions, broadening staffing and deepening our capacity. **The Project Outreach Bus was on the street in the TriCities more hours than ever before, expanding the nights and the hours we are out there connecting with youth – this year we reached our 35,000 contacts!** This change also included regular partnerships with the local municipalities and other locations. The Art Journaling Group expanded, with a sustained partnership through three-year funding, and future programming with School District 43. Our Junior Employee program continued to support youth entering the workforce, and allowing them to gain safe, productive experience to help them in their employment going forward.

## ACCESS Youth Outreach Services Society Overview

After some challenging years during the pandemic, we have launched ourselves forward into a new period of growth, change, and expansion. Our board and employees recommitted to meeting youth where they are – and helping them get to where they want to go. Here’s the highlights of some of the organizational changes we have made over the last year.

### Strategic Plan

In early 2023, we completed a whole Board and staff review of our priorities, and updated our strategic plan. Through wide-ranging discussion, we narrowed our priorities:

1. **Improve the efficiency of organizational practices**
2. **Expand funding sources to increase organization stability**
3. **Partnering with other organizations to streamline and improve services**

### Board Departures

We are grateful to our long-standing board members for their long years of dedicated service, and their continued support for ACCESS Youth. This last year saw the retirement of our long-standing Chair and devoted Board member, Karen Greenland. With deepest thanks, we appreciate her service, and wish her well in retirement. We also said goodbye to Jennifer Wilkie, our treasurer, with much gratitude for her dedication.

### Annual General Meeting – October 25, 2023

Hosted at the Poirier Sports and Leisure Complex, we were pleased to see so many out to support ACCESS Youth Outreach Services Society! We want to thank all the community members, partners, service providers, aligned non-profits, and politicians to attend this important event. We presented the audited financial statements to the members, received their approval, and elected new members of the board, while saying goodbye to old members.

Andrea and Paul MacDonald, of Ethical Waste Services Society, Carol Todd of the Amanda Todd Legacy Foundation, Tom Corner from Imperial Sign Corporation, and Sandpiper Signs and Decals were recognized for their contributions and support of youth in our community.

[Please consult Appendix A to see the slideshow recognizing our sponsors.](#)

### Our New Board:

- Catherine Polonio, Char
- Cathy Painter, Vice-Chair
- Taylor Vincent, Secretary

- Corrie Archer, Member at Large
- Jennifer Blatherwick, Member at Large
- Cathy Painter, Member at Large
- Ami Goshalia, Member at Large (Appointed after the AGM)
- Tanya Elias, Member at Large (Appointed after the AGM)

## Executive and Administration

This last year we continued with our interim Executive Director, Jennifer Blatherwick, in a volunteer capacity, which reduces overhead significantly, allowing us to invest in our financial stability, but is not a permanent solution. We also gained a full-time Program Administrator and Co-ordinator in Alison Truelove, and through targeted funding (Community Services Recovery Grant), a Communications Specialist and Donor Management staffer, Peter Collistro. Marni Winterbottom remains as our accountant.

### Practicum Students

Our Executive Director supervised 2 university/college students placements, from Douglas College: Aliya Gordon and Eve Green. The decision was made to provide paid practicums, to be able to provide a more equitable experience for the students, and to allow us to recruit those with lived experience. The choice worked out very well, as we have continued in our employment relationship with both students after the practicum ended.

The practicum relationship helps give back to the social services support community, and brings fresh ways of professional practice to ACCESS Youth, benefitting the youth, their families, and the communities we proudly serve.

## Volunteers

During the 2023 – 2024 year, we had volunteers participate in our Youth GourMade, Outreach, and in our administration. For the first time this year, we kept track of data on Microsoft Forms, with staff filling out and submitting data for each event. Online submissions are very helpful in ensuring we are keeping track of the data in a timely manner, and the Forms app collects the data into a spreadsheet.

- **Over this year, we had volunteers give over 3821 hours of their time, for a total in-kind donation value of \$153,265.**

## Administration and Governance

### Board of Directors

The serving board dedicated up to three hours per meeting 10 times per year, and also attends events. Over the last year, this included volunteer fairs, booths at community events, and the TriCities Chamber of Commerce Gala.

### Executive Director

The volunteer hours for this position could be pro-rated across all the programs, as outside of administrative work, the ED worked in all positions on the ground. Maintaining staffing was a challenge, as employees are looking for full-time positions, and ACCESS Youth is unable to fully supply the hours required.

### Youth Take Initiative YMCA

This program is through the YMCA, and supports students to volunteer at organizations over a period of several weeks, with the requirement that the students also leave behind a legacy project. Irish Apolinario was our student from this program, and she worked on converting a portion of our paper files into CAMS.

### Social Media and Newsletter Creation

We had two volunteers work with us over the last year – Taylor Miwa, who helped work on social media videos, and another youth, Tessa Adams, who helped with our quarterly newsletters.

Position	Hours	Rate	Donation in Kind Value
Board of Directors	240	\$50	\$12,000
Fundraising	130	\$50	\$6500
Executive Director*	2080	\$50	\$104,000
Youth Take Initiative YMCA	58.5	\$20	\$1170
Social Media/Newletter	50	\$25	\$1250
<b>Total Value of In-kind Volunteer</b>	<b>2558</b>		<b>\$124,920</b>

### Youth GourMade Program:

In the YGM program, we had some youth volunteers who worked with us in packing and delivery throughout Summer Youth GourMade, and then a mother-daughter team, Andrea and Nicole MacDonald (of Ethical Waste Ltd) who delivered one-half of the deliveries every second week. In our Live YGM program at Port Coquitlam Community Centre (PC3), Victoria Bradley was a practicum student who assisted Karen Curtis, our chef, every week with the classes.

Position	Hours	Rate	Donation in Kind Value
Delivery	231	\$20	\$4620
Packaging	60	\$20	\$1800
Live YGM Assistant	60	\$25	
<b>Total Value of In-kind Volunteer</b>	<b>351</b>		<b>\$6420</b>

### Youth Empowerment Worker Program

During part of 2023, we had board members who work in the social work field volunteer their time to provide clinical supervision to YGM staff. Thanks go to Jeremy Edjan and Corrie Archer for their willingness to help our staff in their professional development.

In May of 2023, Britta Regan-West of Quoia Therapeutics began providing professional, paid clinical supervision for YEW staff, at a discounted rate.

Position	Hours	Rate	Donation in Kind Value
Clinical Supervision (Board)	15	\$175	\$2625
Clinical Supervision (Quoia)	30	\$50	\$1500
<b>Total Value of In-kind Volunteer</b>	<b>45</b>		<b>\$4125</b>

### Project Outreach Bus and Community Outreach

Through 2023 and 2024, we had some dedicated volunteers that took on the role of drivers, outreach staff, and volunteers at our booths and events. Additionally, we had groups of students and organizations that helped organize different packages for us to hand out – medical supplies, menstrual health kits, and hygiene kits. At our events, we had volunteers, including board members, who came out to give their time to educate about ACCESS Youth.

Position	Hours	Rate	Donation in Kind Value
Outreach Driver	280	\$25	\$7000
Outreach Staff	310	\$20	\$6200
Youth Volunteers Kit Assembly	60	\$20	\$1200
Starbucks Volunteers Kit Assembly	120	\$20	\$2400
Volunteer Staffing at Booths/Events	97	\$20	\$1940
<b>Total Value of In-kind Volunteer</b>	<b>867</b>		<b>\$16,800</b>

### Decolonization

We developed a new land acknowledgement statement in consultation with Indigenous community members and staff, that encompassed not just words, but a commitment to change and action. ACCESS Youth increased its participation in Indigenous-focused events, including:

- Partnering and co-locating with Spirit of the Children šxʷʔáləqʷaʔ Youth Hub
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Event
- National Indigenous Peoples Day
- National Day for Truth and Reconciliation
- Planning to run an Art Journaling session in partnership with the spirit of the Children šxʷʔáləqʷaʔ Youth Hub

### Financial Statements

We are pleased to say we have completed an audit of our financial statements, generously donated by Essop Mia of Hay & Walker for the third year in a row. Completing this audit increases organizational transparency and means we can go forward with applying for a wider variety and depth of funding. We thank all the staff and

board members who helped to make sure we could complete the audit. Over the last year, we have worked to create financial tracking that allows us to track our grant funding more closely, and better assign costs to each program.

## Technology

Using last year's grant from the Federation of Community Social Services, we updated our software, and added some physical technology. The goal is for staff to spend the most amount of time serving kids, but not sacrifice on our reporting requirements and passing on useful knowledge. Together with staff, we have started implementing our new technology plan:

- Implement 'one touch' reporting: transition away from hand-written paper documentation as much as possible towards staff inputting their reports on laptops
  - **Progress: Began using the CAMS Case Management System. This software is hosted online through PLEA, and allows us to enter case notes and incident reports online, allowing staff to record notes in the field. Two staff members are trained on this system.**
- Co-ordination of all staff and board members to receive secure identities through Microsoft Office Accounts
  - **Progress: ED, Admin, Communications, Secretary, Accountant are all regularly using Microsoft 365 through a two-factor identification system**
- Professional development on getting the best out of the technology
  - **Progress: Professional Development for all staff using the CAMS system, co-ordinated through PLEA**
  - **Progress: Staff have been upgraded to using two-factor identification for logging into Microsoft 365 accounts**
- Improved statistics reporting and monitoring
  - **Progress on Program Reporting**
    - **Bus Stats: Regularly collated online**
    - **Use of Microsoft Forms online by staff at point of delivery:**
    - **Youth GourMade: Stats are recorded weekly delivery tracking and number of volunteer hours**
    - **Art Journaling: Attendance and Likert Scales are recorded after each session**
    - **Youth Empowerment Worker: Case notes, incident reports, and time tracking through CAMS**
  - **Progress on Human Resources**
    - **All time sheets are now digital, with employees able to log in and confirm their hours online**
    - **Time off requests are logged in the system for approval**
    - **Able to assign staffing costs to individual program, and pull staffing cost reports**
- Implementing a digital alert system for Youth Empowerment Workers and Outreach Workers when in the field

- **Progress: Using a text-in and text out system, along with appointment calendar invitations in Microsoft Outlook**

**Change in Overhead Costs**

We continue to partner with the Tri-Cities Opioid Overdose Community Action Team (TCCAT) and SHARE to reduce costs to participate in outreach events and maximize our community impact. The relationship is planned to continue into 2025.

During this year, we were able to share offices with Ethical Waste Services at no cost until February 15, of 2024, a significant donation in kind of more than \$24,000. We also shared space with The People’s Pantry at the Elks Hall location for our Youth GourMade program at no cost until March 31, 2023, which saved us a significant cost of at least \$6,000.

Although both locations became unavailable in the beginning of 2023, we are very grateful for the donation that allowed us to focus resources on increasing the financial health of our organization. At the end of fiscal year 2023-2024, we relocated our offices to the Spirit of the Children Youth Hub, and our Youth GourMade program to St. John’s Anglican Church Rectory. Both these locations come at a cost, and we will need to be consider capital costs in all our ongoing budgets.

**Fundraising**

We participated in events hosted by other organizations where they donated us the proceeds, and engaged with organizations and businesses to solicit donations. This year was our first foray into online fundraising, and included selling 50/50 tickets.

We continue to have a small number of monthly donors, who contribute to us through Canada Helps, or who make regular cash or cheque donations.

Here are the fundraising events we participated in over the 2023 – 2024 fiscal year:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aug 16   Access Youth’s Step into Summer 50/50 Fundraiser</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ \$1055 was awarded to the winner of 50/50 draw</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>May 1   ACCESS Youth Spring into Mental Health Auction Fundraiser</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>June 19   Pomme Natural Market Karma Cookies Donation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A portion of the proceeds for all packages of Karma Cookies sold were donated to ACCESS Youth</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dec 8   Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce’s Eat, Drink and Be Groovy Holiday Luncheon</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Included donation \$2,000</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Nov 27 Sweet and Salty Christmas Market</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Cassandra Cakes and Patina Brewing – second year in a row!</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>December   The Home Depot Port Coquitlam Orange Door Project Campaign Event</b></li> <li>• Access Youth staffed a table at the PoCo Home Depot to raise awareness for their fundraising campaign</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dec 15   AGF Rebar Bus Logo Reveal</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Included \$75,000 Donation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Feb 17   City of Port Coquitlam – Week of Giving</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Donations from employees</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sept 8   Hard Rock Casino Vancouver Donation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Included \$3,600 Donation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Aug 5   TELUS Friendly Future Foundation Donation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Included \$17,000 Donation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>October – Dodge the Stigma Fundraiser</b></li> </ul>	

## Outreach

*Outreach programs for 2023 -2024 include the PRO Bus Outreach, booths/tables at events in the community, and a pilot project at Coquitlam Centre Mall. New elements for this year included our partnership with the City of Coquitlam, through the Strengthening Community Services Grant, which allowed us to expand our hours from October to the end of January 2024. Throughout the rainy winter season, we also established an arrangement with Port Coquitlam Community Centre and the Port Moody Recreation Centre to have a table outside their Youth Hubs on Friday and Saturday night respectively. We also established a short pilot with Coquitlam Centre Mall through March and April 2024.*

### Bus Outreach

Bus-Based Project Reach Out operated in the TriCities on Friday and Saturday evenings from the end of May onwards, and starting in October 2023 to March 31, 2024, on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. This expansion in services was made possible through the City of Coquitlam choosing us as a recipient of the Strengthening Community Services Grant. These funds were from the federal government, and were meant to support unhoused people within the community. From this same grant, we also created wound care kits for distribution to those who were struggling with injuries caused on the street, and from substances contaminated with xylazine.

During the rainy months of the winter, we arranged with Port Coquitlam Recreation Centre to set up a booth outside their youth hub. Every Friday night, ACCESS Youth was there with a table, connecting with youth through games and conversation. Later in the season, we were able to make this same connection with the Port Moody Recreation Centre for Saturday nights.

From June 2023 to March 31<sup>st</sup> of 2024, the **bus made more than 2,605 contacts!** Bus contact numbers are inclusive of visits made to Youth Community Hubs, which mitigates the trend of decreased youth contact out on the street during the coldest months of the year. Summer months continued to be very strong for contact – although looking at the numbers of contacts, we see increased numbers trending into the fall. This change is due to the large increase – more than double – in the hours of the bus from October 2023 through March 2024.

Due to the Strengthening Community Services Grant funding from the City of Coquitlam, we also saw an increase in the number of adults 23+ encountering the bus. Our priority remained reaching out to youth, but alongside that prime concern, we made sure to stop by areas where unhoused adults gather. This meant we developed new regular stops, like 3030 Gordon, Lincoln Sky Train Station, and in the field behind the Planet Ice. These new connections developed with adults allowed us to distribute a high number of harm reduction supplies, which included naloxone kits, syringes, foil, cookers, screens – all sterile materials that are provided to us at no cost by the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC) and the Public Health Authority (PHA).

The gender statistics are not perfectly reflective of the community, as we don't ask the youth about their gender orientation and sexual identity during our conversations, and wait for the information to be volunteered. This leads to an under-representation of the queer youth we encounter.

The materials provided to us represent an enormous donation in kind. Each Naloxone kit represents about \$80 – and we have passed out to the community more than 40 kits. All of these supplies in the community mean that the person who directly receives them is safer, and so is everyone around them, as it reduces risk and transmission amongst the entire community.

## 2023/2024 Data for Bus Outreach

### Demographics of Contacts

#### Gender Presentation (by percentage)

Male	Female	Non-Bi	Trans	Questioning
67.15%	32.67%	0%	0.08%	0.04%

#### Ethnicity (by numbers)

Caucasian	Indigenous	B-POC	South/East Asian	Middle Eastern	Other
1640	316	373	260	4	36
68.95%	2.27%	15.68%	10.93%	0.17%	1.51%

#### Age Range (by number)

12 & Under	13 – 14	15 – 16	17 – 18	19 – 23	23+
164	397	570	97	84	1293
6.30%	15.24%	21.88%	3.72%	3.23%	49.62%

#### Supply and Literature Distribution (by number)

Drug Ed.	Sex Ed	Access Program	Clothing	Food/Water	Community
168	119	511	403	2780	92

#### Contact By Month

Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
0	0	209	247	99	390	282	327	412	327	224	265
0%	0%	7.03%	8.31%	3.33%	13.11%	9.49%	11.00%	13.85%	11.00%	7.54%	8.91%

## Community Outreach

Access Youth Outreach Services expanded its participation in community, with participation at decision-making tables. We've also been taking tables at events distribute information, supplies, and to raise awareness of our programs. Even if a youth or family doesn't need us at this moment – they may need us later or know someone who desperately needs our services.

### ***Community Tables Participation***

Co-operation with other TriCities non-profits, government bodies, and agencies allows us to bring a voice for youth into the conversation. We collaborate with these other organizations to improve the conditions for the youth we serve.

- TriCities Opioid Overdose Community Action Team
- Healthy Communities Partnership
- TriCities Community Youth Table
- TriCities Homelessness and Housing Task Force
- Foundry Discussion Group
- Coquitlam FAST Table

## Events

We participated in many events over the last year, distributing information, supplies, and connections to services out in the community. The connections make it possible for us to co-operate with other agencies in making sure we are aware of emerging situations in the community, stay up-to-date on the programs available to youth, and co-ordinate with other agencies. Many of our self-referrals from youth or families come from the meetings at community outreach events.

### ***2023 – 2024 ACCESS Community Outreach Events***

- April 16 | Stand With Us Year 7 – Anniversary of the Declaration of the Toxic Drug Supply Crisis in BC
- April 19 | City of Port Coquitlam Volunteer Recognition Night
- April 29 Tri-Cities Chamber of Commerce Business Excellence Awards – Non-Profit of the Year
- May 11 | City of Port Coquitlam May Days Parade 2023
- May 27 | Tri-Cities Pride Society LGBTQIA2S+ Family Picnic
- June 11 | City of Coquitlam Teddy Bear Parade
- June 18 | Marathon A Day For Safe Supply Event
- July 16 | The Jr Black Achievement Awards Society Presents Our Annual Community Picnic In The Park
- Sept 9 | Recovery Days in New Westminster
- Sept 9 | Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Group Meeting
- Sept 30 | National Day of Truth and Reconciliation at Westminster Pier Park
- Oct 22 | 2023 Volunteer Fall Fair

- Dec 16 | Coquitlam Express Hockey Club – Game Night
- Dec 31 | Mackin Park at the 2nd Annual Winter Solstice Festival & Lantern Walk
- Dec 8 | Connecting with youth and the community at Port Coquitlam Rec Centre

## After-School Programs

We run two after-school program – Art Journaling Group and the Youth GourMade program. Both programs reach out to youth in the community and support positive mental wellness habits, and help us make connections to youth, families, and schools.



### Art Journaling Group

The *Art Journaling Group* is an after-school program that was created in response to the initial COVID-19 lockdown in 2020 when we recognized how much the pandemic was impacting our youths' mental health. The Art Journaling Group (AJG) is a strength-based after-school program that provides youth with opportunities to explore and discuss hard to talk about and socially relevant topics of conversation at their level of understanding and communication.

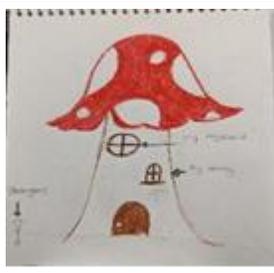
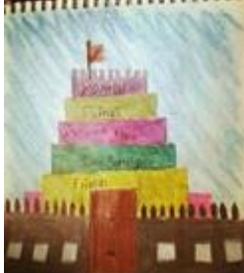
This program was offered virtually three times during 2021, to youth aged 12 to 19, and then in 2022-2023, transitioned to in-person sessions. In 2023-2024, we were able to secure a three-year grant from the City of Coquitlam, through the Building Safer Communities Grant, to run this program in schools for youth in Coquitlam. The school district continues to fund programming that runs in Port Coquitlam schools.

The program ran in the 11 locations as an after-school program in Coquitlam, and an additional 3 programs in Port Coquitlam. We will continue to run the program across the district in the 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 school years.

Each week our team facilitates the curriculum-based program by guiding topics of conversation: boundaries, alcohol and drug use, abuse and misuse, and suicide and self-harm. Our facilitators then teach youth a new art technique where participants explore painting with water colours or acrylics, learn to manipulate charcoal and develop shadow, work with pastels, and many other artistic media. Youth combine the learned art technique and produce an art project that reflects what was discussed during the topic of conversation.

This year in addition to providing sessions to students, we were asked to lead a session for teaching staff at a Pitt River Middle Professional Day.

**Examples of Art from Students:**

<b>Boundaries and using a castle as the metaphor for your limits; pencil crayon is the media</b>			
			
<b>Alcohol &amp; Drugs; use, abuse, and misuse: media was young artist's choice</b>			
			



**Youth GourMade**

*Youth Gour-Made* continues to be one of our most successful and highly regarded programs. In 2023, we continued to run this program with help from Community Gaming Grant, United Way Food Hub, and the Feeding Futures Funding via School District 43.

In early 2023, we were able to co-share with The People’s Pantry in Elks Hall in Port Coquitlam at no cost. This was an extremely valuable opportunity, as commercial space in the TriCities is costly. We estimate the value of that in-kind donation as over \$24,000, and although it had to come to an end in March 2024, as the building has been purchased for development, we remain grateful for the funding this allowed us to apply directly to overhead instead of to capital expenditure.

Over this last year, we have worked with School District 43 to continue to identify youth and families who would benefit from improved food security. As opposed to last year, where 80% of the families participated due to food scarcity, this year, 100% of the families need support obtaining healthy, nutritious food.

**Here are some stats from Youth GourMade from April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024:**

Number of Hampers	Number of Meals	Volunteer Hours	Backpack Buddies Packages
1465	6429.00	231.1	385

The number of hampers is the individual packages delivered to each home every week. Some packages are larger than others, as families with more members receive a large amount of food, and so the number of meals is not directly proportional to the number of families participating in the program. Some families have as little as two members, and some are as large as nine. Every week, the staff also keep track of the number of

The program went on hiatus from January of 2023 to March of 2023 for staffing reorganizations, and then delivered for 10 weeks until the end of the 2022-2023 school year, through the summer, and then over the school year through to June of 2024.

**Summer Youth GourMade**

For the first time in 2023, we ran a Summer Youth GourMade program. Many families who participated in Youth GourMade have different schedules in the summer, and our regular staff has alternate plans for the summer.

Before the summer of 2023, the School District asked if Access Youth would be able to support a smaller number of families over the summertime. Summer is a challenging time for families who struggle with food security, as

opportunities for food supplementing with the school is not available. Youth workers tell us that children return to school in the fall weighing a few pounds less than when they left at the end of the previous school year.

We were able to deliver a smaller program to 24 families over 8 weeks, using staffing time from the Administration position, a Junior Employee, and a volunteer.

### **Co-operation with Other Organizations**

During this last year, we co-operated with other organizations to add more food to our weekly hampers.

Through The People's Pantry and Immigrant Link Centre Society, we were able to add some produce, as well as baked goods. The People's Pantry recovers food from a variety of grocery stores, picking up items that are nearing their Best Before date, but still safe to eat. Their redistribution to their own clients through their hamper programs prevents thousands of pounds of food from going into the landfill.

We also worked with CityReach Care Society, which operates here in Port Coquitlam out of the Broadway Church, to distribute 15 of their hampers for both of the two weeks`

### **This year, instead of a survey, we asked youth and their families to tell their Youth GourMade story:**

*I know that my mom would say the program has helped us all. I am trans masculine and was interested in kickboxing and guitar and other things a few years ago but fight with anxiety and depression and lost interest in everything including school. This was the only program I wanted to do and have learned a lot doing it.*

*-- Anonymous, Youth Participant*

*Youth GourMade has helped me to achieve the skill set of cooking. I've always liked to cook, however; I wasn't sure how to do much and wanted to learn more. On top of learning, I feel that cooking has brought my family and I together through homemade dishes.*

*--Raiya, Youth Participant*

*I know that my mom would say the program has helped us all. I am trans masculine and was interested in kickboxing and guitar and other things a few years ago but fight with anxiety and depression and lost interest in everything including school. This was the only program I wanted to do and have learned a lot doing it.*

*--Anonymous, Youth Participant*

*I have a son with special needs and he and my youth have done the cooking together ever since the start and when Arian was very sick, he kept her going, he loves cooking and the both of them did together it has been amazing.*

*--Charlene Shular, Parent to Youth Participant*



## Youth Empowerment:

Our agency continues to receive an increasing number of referrals to our *Youth Empowerment Worker Program*, a trend that has continued since 2020. We brought on additional staff in 2021 to engage with this increased demand, and we have maintained that through 2024, but there is still a significant need in the community. We do refer cases to other agencies, and we co-operate with Spirit of the Children, an Indigenous-serving organization, to consult or take on cases if youth clients have Indigenous ancestry.

The Youth Empowerment Worker Program provides help for youth – we help them find supports, like counselling, housing, reconnection to school or employment, and develop healthy community relationships. Our agency exists because of these cases – the ones that don't fit into other agency's mandates, or because the most at-risk youth are reluctant to connect with traditional services. Going out onto the street helps us find youth who are struggling to make it into offices or fill out paperwork. We assist in making and keeping appointments, finding resources, and helping youth get to their goals. However – over the last year, we have been facing increasing challenges in helping youth find their way. Three notable shifts this year were the increase in the severity of the client cases, the number of cases with older youth that we extended beyond a six-month service period, and the extreme lack of housing availability.

We support youth from 12 – 23, and in previous years, have helped many youth over the age of 19 successfully find housing. However, over this last year, even though there were youth on our caseload that were eligible for social housing, they were unable to be placed into homes due the increased demand across the Lower Mainland. In addition, the increase in cost-of-living, including the astronomical increase in rent, means that older youth, who are technically adults, have aged out of supports, but are unable to support themselves with low-skilled employment. In the past, it was possible for youth who had difficult circumstances to leave high school and find full-time employment that would allow them to survive while they took additional job training. However, now we are experiencing such a rise in the cost of living that many youth are unable to afford safe accommodations and healthy food, even when they are working two jobs.

As a result, we were unable to clear the same number of cases as in previous years. Although we maintained a similar number of spaces on our caseload, we could not move on as quickly to new cases. Last year we were able to support 56 cases, but this year with the increased need per case we were able to responsibly support 29. Each youth is now taking more time on our caseload, as we are unable to refer them to other services, and they continue to struggle with mental wellness issues. We continue to work with any and all organizations to ensure that youth get the best, most appropriate, in-time care, but the increase of youth in need across the sector will require us to work even harder.

Our cases ranged from supporting LGBTQIA2S+ youth managing the experiences of coming out and/or addressing homo/transphobia in their families, youth caught in the criminal justice system, youth deeply

depressed and anxious from the pandemic, youth being trafficked, special needs youth seeking opportunities, youth seeking employment support, and youth who are simply alone and need someone to talk to.

All programming is backed by our core value of: “No Youth Left Behind!”, so that our services are barrier-free and easily accessible. In 2022 our YEWs skillfully connected with youth in their environments whether it was on the streets, in their schools, their homes, virtual settings, or other places in the communities—our YEWs continued to meet youth where they are so that no youth was left behind.

### Change in Program Funding and Partnerships with Other Agencies

This year, we established two different contracts with the Ministry of Children and Family Development to support specific youth. One was through connecting with the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment Adults (SAJE) program, which was previously known as the Adults with Youth Agreements program. We also have a separate independent program to support another youth, as the supports required for them in the YEW program were beyond what is normally provided. This agreement was made with Jennifer Owen, Acting Director of Operations for the TriCities/Permanency and Adoptions, and is for a specific youth.

### Program Statistics

Case(s) From 2023-04-01 to 2024-03-31 Youth Empowerment - Worker Stats Summary

No. of Cases	23-Apr	23-May	23-Jun	23-Jul	23-Aug	23-Sep	23-Oct	23-Nov	23-Dec	24-Jan	24-Feb	24-Mar	Total
1. In Program	12	10	10	11	11	12	13	15	15	14	16	21	28
2. Referred		0	0		0			2	9	0	3	2	20
3. Removed	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
4. Opened		0	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	0	4	6	17
5. Discharged	2	0	0	0	0	0	0			2			8
Average Monthly Number of Case(s): <b>13.33</b> Average Age at Referral: <b>17.89</b> Average Age at Open: <b>17.93</b>													
Avg Days in Program: <b>812.88</b> (8 Cases Discharged) Avg Days Wait: <b>27.29</b> (17 Cases Opened)													

Through 2023 to 2024, the YEW program supported 28 youth, including 20 new cases, and 8 pre-existing ones. This is very close to the 29 cases we maintained last year. Moving into the 2024 – 2025 year, we hope to increase this number to 30, but with the complexity of the cases, there is only so many youth we can responsibly supported.

We closed 8 cases, two due to youth moving out of our services area, and two for youth successfully establishing a return to school, where they were provided with additional supports. During this period, four of the cases closed due to non-contact. Youth will occasionally cease contact, and they are entitled to that choice. We always check in with the youth several times, with all of the methods of contact we have available. If we have any indications of a threat to safety, we follow up with the appropriate bodies.

Of the youth on our caseload, 8 were referred to counselling. Some were able to attain a placement at Child and Youth Mental Health, or through SHARE Family and Community Services. Other youth were connected to Lumara, which is a non-profit that provides counselling for youth and children experiencing grief or loss. We also formed a partnership with the Amanda Todd Foundation to subsidize counselling for youth with professionals that specialize in supporting sex-trafficking survivors and intimate partner violence.

This year, we also made contracts with the Ministry of Children and Family Development for youth that would benefit from supports outside of their framework. We work collaboratively with them to support youth who experienced serious, ongoing trauma within the system and are not able to form trusting relationships with government workers. However – these youth still need services, and assistance to maintain their current supports.

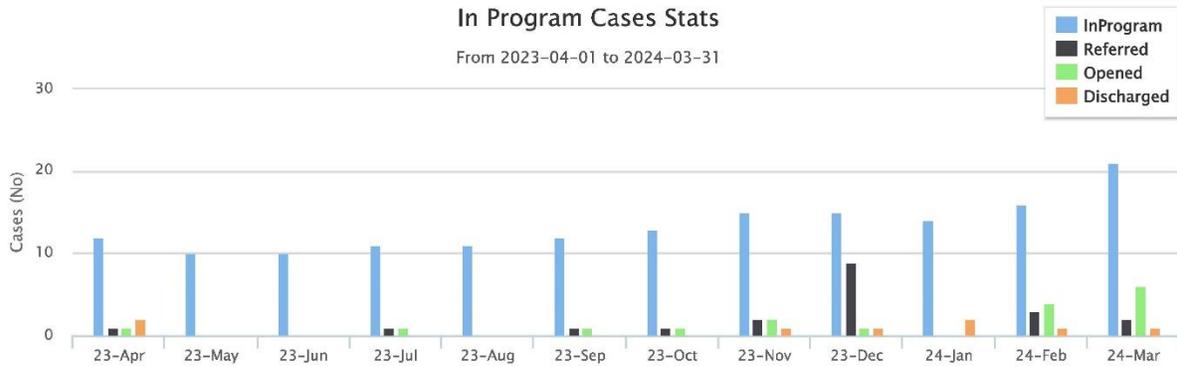
ACCESS was able to help two youth into housing, which has become exponentially more difficult over this last year.

Additionally, we were able to help four youth maintain their current housing, which they had been in critical danger of losing.

One of our main goals is to help youth find sustainable supports that will allow them to grow and become successfully independent. Outside of the trauma and economic disadvantage that many of our youth experience, they also struggle with a ‘resourcing debt’. Within healthy natural support circles, children and youth experience adult mentorship and guidance towards the tasks of adulthood – finances, employment, professional interactions, and the responsibilities of maintaining a household. A significant number of our youth have grown in environments that were time-poor, with adults that were not able to support them in learning about life.

No one has ever talked with them about taxes, or bank accounts, or how to cook for themselves. Many of the services that will support them are gate-kept behind complex bureaucracy and long application forms. Over this last year, 7 of our youth were supported to apply for the additional funding they were entitled to, including Underage Income Assistance, Persons with Disabilities funding, and financial support for former youth in care pursue post-secondary education.

## **Program Statistics**



As the year progressed from April 2023 to March 2024, we were able to bring on more stable staffing, and grow our program. In January of 2024, we paused new intakes to make sure we could clear our waiting list, and at the end of the year we had a complement of 22 youth, support by two part-time Youth Empowerment Workers.

### Youth Empowerment Worker Biographical Data

Gender	#	%	A%	Indigenous	#	%	A%	Referral Type	#	%	A%
Male	10	35.71	35.71	Indigenous	7	25.00	25.00	Self	16	57.14	57.14
Female	16	57.14	57.14	Non-Indigenous	21	75.00	75.00	Professional	6	21.43	21.43
Non Binary / LGBTQ2S+	2	7.14	7.14					Family	5	17.86	17.86
								Other	1	3.57	3.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Age at Referral	#	%	A%	Age at Open	#	%	A%	Current Age	#	%	A%
13-15	7	25.00	25.93	13-15	7	25.00	25.93	13-15	7	25.00	25.93

During this last year, the numbers of youth supported in our one-to-one program trended towards female youth, the inverse of the statistics we see in our Bus program, which connects with more male youth. Our Case Management program only tracks Indigenous vs. non-Indigenous youth at this time, showing that 25% of the youth on our YEW caseload are Metis, Inuit, First Nations, or Indigenous.

Referrals are predominantly self-referral, especially for older youth, while younger youth are more likely to be referred by a professional or a family member.

## Traditional News Media and Social Media

Exciting to see ACCESS in the news this year! Next year we can improve this by sending out press releases one week before each event, and inviting TriCities Community TV to our events.

### TriCities Dispatch

- **Pub Night to support youth programs, outreach for TriCities youth**  
<https://tricitiedispatch.com/pub-support-youth/>

### TriCity News

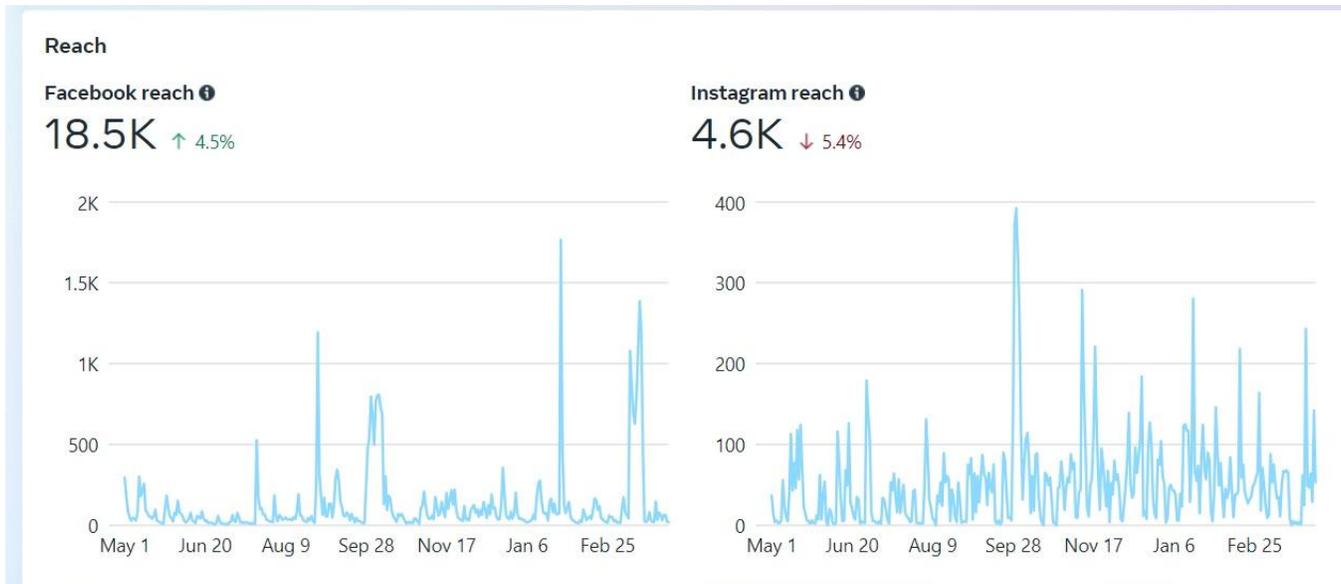
- **Homelessness is getting worse in the Tri-Cities. Here's what's being done**  
[Redefining roles: How the Tri-Cities wants to tackle homelessness - Tri-City News \(tricitynews.com\)](#)



- **Tri-Cities charities, non-profits split \$831K in federal post-pandemic cash**  
[More than \\$831K to boost Tri-Cities community projects - Tri-City News \(tricitynews.com\)](#)
- **ACCESS Youth Wins TriCities Chamber of Commerce Non-Profit of the Year**  
[Meet the winners of the 2023 Tri-Cities Chamber BEAs - Tri-City News \(tricitynews.com\)](#)
- **B.C.'s drug poisoning crisis isn't simple, but the Tri-Cities is stepping up to fight it**  
[Column: B.C.'s drug poisoning crisis isn't simple, but the Tri-Cities is stepping up to fight it - Tri-City News \(tricitynews.com\)](#)

### Social Media

- **Facebook**  
Main page for Access Youth Outreach Services, and secondary pages for Art Journaling and Youth GourMade
- **Instagram:** Main page for Access Youth, and another account for Youth GourMade
- **Twitter:** One account for the organization



*Social media reach over Facebook and Instagram for April 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024.*

Overall, the social media interactions across Facebook rose, with a 4.5% increase in reach. Our spending on advertising this year was negligible, and so this reach is organic, and due in part by a large number of shares from people who like our page.

Another factor was the practice of posting to community groups, which allows us to reach a larger audience. Two groups that have been very helpful in boosting our exposure have been the TriCity Moms Group, with a membership of 17,000+ people, and the Coquitlam Community Page, where we get a significant response. The TCMG is moderated, and we had to seek permission to post about our programs. The TCMG also works to provide hampers and supports to mothers and families facing poverty, and working alongside them during Spring Break has created excellent synergy.

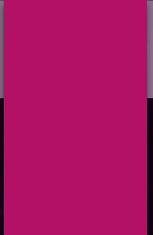
Our Instagram reach fell 5.4% - and is a reminder that we need to feed that algorithm videos. Although static pictures and text can still be effective on Facebook, Instagram really thrives on Reels (short videos less than 2 minutes). For the upcoming year, we need to review with staff how to make Reels when they are posting about our programs, and remind them about tagging our sponsors and donors.



# APPENDICES

## **APPENDIX A**

### **AGM Thank You Presentation**



**access youth**

**OUTREACH SERVICES SOCIETY**

**AGM 2023**



## **AGF Foundation**

**To recognize their 75<sup>th</sup> year, AGF Foundation generously donated \$75,000 to Access Youth Outreach Services Society. This generous support will help multi-barriered youth in our community.**



TELUS Friendly  
Future Foundation

**The TELUS Friendly Future Foundation sponsors our one-on-one Youth Empowerment Worker program, that meets youth where they are, to help them get to where they want to go. TELUS Friendly Future Foundation's contribution created the equivalent of 480+ hours of services for youth in the YEW program!**



**The City of Coquitlam supported the Bus program through a Spirit of Coquitlam grant, and has partnered with ACCESS Youth through the Building Safer Communities grant to fund Art Journaling in Coquitlam schools for the next three years. Through the Strengthening Community Services grant, Access Youth will be able to deliver Wound Care Kits and additional nights on the Bus.**



**Amanda Todd Legacy Society and Carol Todd work tirelessly to make the digital world a safer place for children and youth- and through their dedicated support of real-world initiatives in programs like the Bus, they make the real world kinder, more compassionate place for at-risk and vulnerable youth.**



# Ethical Waste Services Ltd.

*We Recycle. We Donate. We Care.*

**ACCESS Youth could not ask for more from donors than Paul and Andrea MacDonald and their company, Ethical Waste Services Ltd., give to ACCESS Youth.**

**Through their generous financial support, and the contribution of office space in their Ethical Waste location, ACCESS is able to have a home base. And Paul and Andrea dedicate their own personal time to volunteering in ACCESS programs! Their compassion and selflessness truly make a difference in the lives of youth in our community.**



**Imperial Sign Corporation includes contributes to ACCESS Youth every quarter, giving back to the community on a consistent basis, and involving their employees in the process.**

**Why do they give? Because they want to help local youth and kids in the TriCities.**



**Coquitlam Florist donated the use of their delivery van to our Youth GourMade program. Every year that works to the value of more than 200 meals families.**



# The People's Pantry

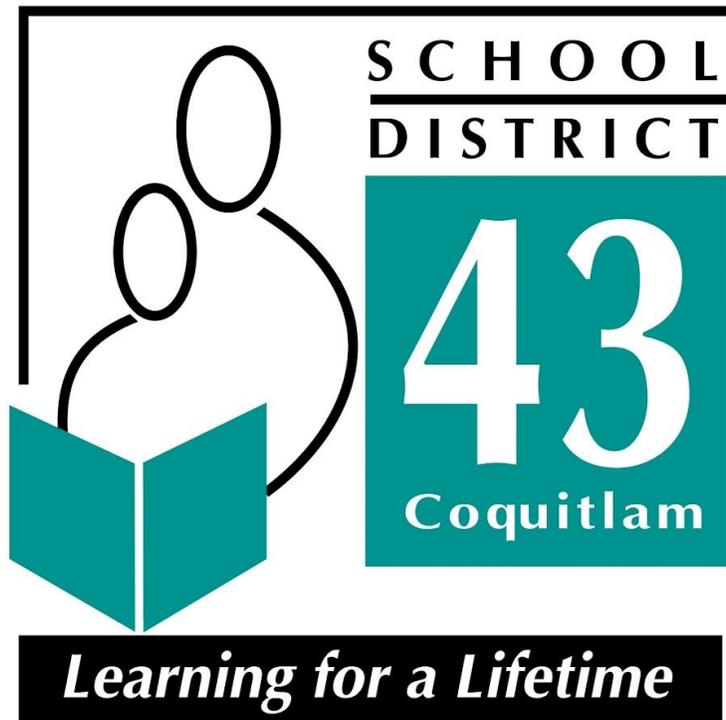
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FOOD RECOVERY SOCIETY

**The People's Pantry stepped in and offered space for our Youth GourMade program. Their big hearts and love for the community make the YGM program possible. In addition, they contribute shelf-stable food that goes into our YGM kits and out on the bus – they help us help youth.**



**Through the Civil Forfeiture Program, the Province of British Columbia contributes to the one-on-one support of youth in the TriCities, and helps #MoveThatBus. The Bus goes in to the dark to help meet youth where they are, and help them get to where they want to go. Connection makes youth safer, and our communities safer.**



**School District 43 (Coquitlam) provides stable funding for food security, and through their support, the Youth GourMade program has helped so many youth across the TriCites learn to feed themselves – and their families – healthy, nutritious, cost-effective meals**



**Pomme**  
NATURAL MARKET

**Through the sale of their delicious Karma Cookies, Pomme Natural Market has supported ACCESS Youth programming, helping us bring food, art journaling, Bus outreach, and one-on-one supports to vulnerable youth across the TriCities.**

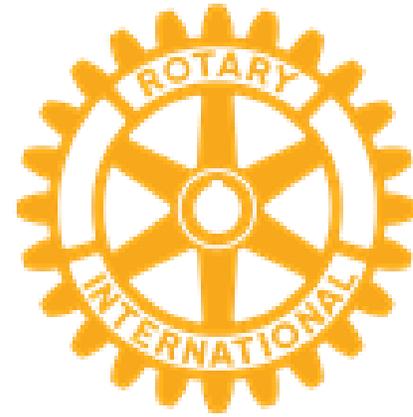


**The  
Orange  
Door  
Project**

**The Home Depot Canada Foundation, through the Port Coquitlam Home Depot, collects donations for ACCESS Youth through the Orange Door Projects.**

**Last year, they made more than 20 nights on the bus possible, and helped us distribute food, water, clothing harm reduction supplies, and connection back to community to at-risk youth. Thank you!**

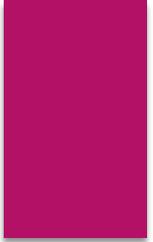
# Rotary Club of Coquitlam



**The Coquitlam Sunrise Rotary Club has been making a difference since 1981 supporting causes through financial donation and their hands-on work.**

**This last year, they supported our Art Journaling Program, which allowed us to reduce the costs to schools and students for the program.**

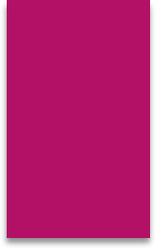
**Thank you to The Ames Family  
Foundation, who contributed  
substantially to our Youth  
GourMade program, making  
sure that families in our  
communities were fed, and  
youth developed the skills to  
make healthy, nutritious  
meals!**



**THE  
AMES  
FAMILY  
FOUNDATION**



**United Way**  
**Lower Mainland**



C I T Y O F  
**PORT**  
**COQUITLAM**



**PORT COQUITLAM**  
**RECREATION**

**Move. Create. Connect.**

The City of Port Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam Recreation have been invaluable partners in providing direct funding and in-kind contributions to make sure our programs can benefit youth in their community

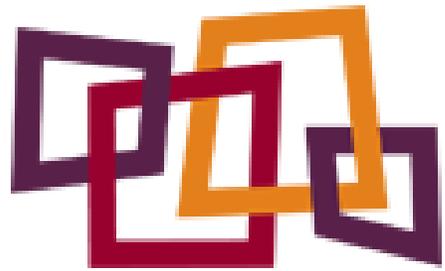
Check out the live Youth GourMade cooking program run every Monday by Chef Karen!



**eliminating racism  
empowering women**

**ywca**

**Through our partnership with the YWCA, ACCESS Youth funds a Youth Specialist at Work BC. This full-time staff person connects youth with employment skills, job training, work experience placements, and education. Changing lives through choice and empowerment!**



THE FEDERATION

*of* COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES *of* BC

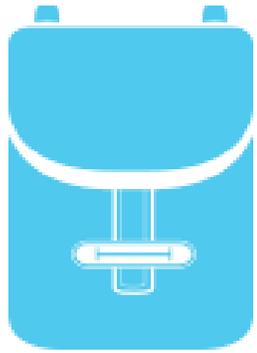
**Overhead is difficult for non-profits, and the Federation of Community Social Services of BC understands that challenge. Their support allowed us to purchase new technology and upgrade our software for greater security and efficiency.**

# Coquitlam Foundation

**Through the Community services Recovery Grant, the Coquitlam Foundation has made it possible for ACCESS to get solid organizational funding that supports communications with supporters, donors, and clients. ACCESS can continue to thrive, grow, and help youth thanks in part to the Coquitlam Foundation.**

Funded by the  
Government of Canada's  
Community Services Recovery Fund

  
Canada



# Backpack Buddies

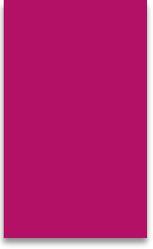
**On a weekly basis during the school year, food-insecure families get an extra helping of food thanks to the packages of shelf-stable items contributed by Backpack Buddies. This helps stretch budgets through difficult times for youth that are really struggling.**



**Immigrant Link Centre Society has contributed additional food to our weekly meal kits, and contributed snacks for our Outreach workers to distribute from the Bus. We thank them for their caring for youth in our community.**



**The Poco Community Foundation is a long-time valuable partner in growing good things in the City of Port Coquitlam. In partnership with the TriCities Opioid Overdose Community Action Team (TCCAT), their sponsorship allowed us to organize public events to destigmatize substance use, raise and highlight the damage of the toxic drug crisis.**



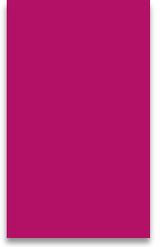
**W**  
**WOODY'S**  
**DARE TO DREAM**  
**FOUNDATION**

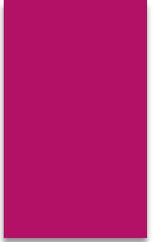
**A local community and a supporter of many initiatives, the Woody's Dare to Dream Foundation supports many worthy causes, including ACCESS Youth. Woody's hosted one of our pub nights – in the snow! - and made a significant contribution that supported the equivalent of 330 meals for families in our Youth GourMade program**



# Beacon Unitarian Church

**Beacon Unitarian  
Church**





**CKNW**  
**Kids'**  
**FUND**

The CKNW Kids' Fund supports ACCESS' Youth Empowerment Worker program. Their faith in the YEW program has changed the lives of youth who needed support. The YEW program clients who require supports that last – and CKNW kids' Fund makes that possible.





**Great Canadian Casinos is the parent company behind our local landmark, the Hard Rock Casino Vancouver. Thanks to their support, ACCESS Youth is able to support 120 hours in the One-on-one Youth Empowerment Program.**



Every \$25 is a kid in our Youth GourMade cooking skills program for one week, every \$160 is a registration in the Art Journaling Group, and every \$1000 supports a night for the ACCESS Youth bus...Sponsors like Maple Leaf Storage make it happen.



G&F

FINANCIAL GROUP



Through their holiday donation collection campaign and a donation-in-kind, OPUS Art Supplies in Maillardville made sure that youth in our Art Journaling Groups were provided with beautiful, high-quality sketch books and art supplies. Through their generosity, more than 100 students will receive art supplies completely free of charge.





What do you do with a 24-foot purple bus? You park it at the Fire Hall! Thank you to Coquitlam Firefighters for hosting our Bus, bringing down our insurance, and keeping all our supplies safe when we are not on the road.



Thank you to the Port Moody Firefighters Charitable Society! Their support sent out the Bus for one additional night, fully staffed. Your support means we can connect with an average of 25 kids per night.



**Thank you Sandpiper Signs and Decals, who helps us look our best in the community! Every donation in kind helps us to use our resources on helping youth.**



**TriCities Starbucks – especially the PoCo Prairie location! - is an active supporter of ACCESS Youth. Every Thursday, they donate food for the Bus, and give shelf-stable items to the Youth GourMade program. And they helped with packaging Wound Care kits – it's amazing how fast a room of well-caffeinated people can pack 100 kits!**



**Vancity Shaughnessy Branch supported Project Outreach with a donation that ran the bus for 10 extra nights, and donated practical supplies that helped us get food to families in our Youth Gourmade program.**