

2023 - 2024

# WESTMINSTER HOUSE SOCIETY

## A YEAR IN REVIEW

WESTMINSTER  
*House* 

HELPING WOMEN RECOVER FROM ADDICTION SINCE 1981

This year, Westminster House Society (WHS) celebrated 43 years of providing addiction recovery support for women, youth girls, and their families. The organization offers a comprehensive continuum of care, including Primary Care, Second Stage Transition (which provides housing and continued access to programming), and the Ongoing Recovery Program, offering long-term supportive recovery housing.

# Welcome Home

This year, WHS welcomed a new Executive Director. The transition prioritized a smooth leadership shift through close collaboration between the Executive Director, Program Director and a newly engaged communications professional. The new leadership team has prioritized developing staff training, appreciation, and fostering a cohesive team. WHS values empowering women and strengthening connections with other female-led organizations. Initiatives included inviting these organizations to participate in WHS events such as International Women’s Day and open house BBQs, enhancing community engagement and collaboration. The facilities are continuously being improved to provide a warm and welcoming introduction to recovery. Additionally, WHS worked on building new partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations to improve its cultural competency and broaden its client base, doing its part to reach vulnerable and underserved populations. Figure F.1 illustrates the number of individuals served during the 2023-2024 fiscal year.

PROGRAM	PERSONS SERVED
<b>PRIMARY CARE (YOUTH, ADULT, FUNDED, PRIVATE)</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>ONGOING RECOVERY</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>RECOVERY HOUSING</b>	<b>23</b>

FIGURE F.1

# Development

## ALUMNAE PROGRAM

During the fiscal year, WHS provided many aftercare resources to its alumnae. This included numerous formal educational/training opportunities offered to program graduates. Westminster House secured 56 education grants, sending alumnae to a diverse range of training opportunities that dealt with both soft and technical skills, industry- recognized credentials, and occupational certifications. We were also pleased to have outfitted seven of our student and/or single mother alumnae with donated MacBook computers, from one of our long term sponsors, allowing them to be work or school-ready and setting them up for success.

## EVENTS

WHS had a busy year for events. In keeping with tradition, we held our annual Holiday Open House. We were very excited to have the New West Fire Department (NWFD) rejoin the festivities this year. Thankfully there was no calamity going on elsewhere in the neighborhood and they showed up just in time to light our grand Christmas Tree! The NWFD Charitable Society also extended a great kindness to us this year, donating several toys to give out as Christmas gifts to clients' children. In addition, we celebrated International Women's Day (IWD) with a whole new kind of zeal. We invited members from other female-led organizations to attend, provided dinner, and had empowering female figures share their story. Our in-house IWD event was a success, and we anticipate this becoming another one of our signature events. Our annual Clean Up New West (CUNW) event was also a triumph. We had bigger backing from the City and community partners, and Prospera Credit Union signed on as a sponsor. In total, 1196 lbs of waste was removed from the streets of New Westminster.



# Development

## INITIATIVES

WHS had the privilege of joining some important initiatives this past year. In January we joined The New Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), a campaign with a collective mission to ensure nasal naloxone accessibility on job sites throughout British Columbia. WHS along with other recovery service providers and trade organizations are fighting for a future free from preventable workplace fatalities due to toxic drugs. In the spring we also applied to do our part toward the federal homelessness strategy: the Reaching Home program - an initiative to support the most vulnerable Canadians in maintaining safe, stable and affordable housing and to reduce chronic homelessness nationally by 50% by fiscal year 2027/28. As approximately 40% of WHS' client demographic intakes unhoused or precariously housed, it is indeed doing its part toward the nation's homelessness crisis. No client is ever supported to leave our care without safe and stable housing in place, and our goal is always to help them build the skills so they can help themselves and work toward a self-supporting productive life. The program requires us to report pertinent data about our client demographic that will help form a coordinated response from our government to the housing crisis.



# Empowering Programs



## ADDED PRIORITIES

- *Reduce Barriers*
- *Increased Autonomy*
- *Diversify Programming & Treatment Modalities*
- *Cultural Competency*



## STAFFING INITIATIVES

- *Team building Workshops*
- *Education & Training*
- *Creating Safe Spaces/Improved Morale*



# Programs

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## ADULT

We have continued to serve women and youth girls struggling with substance misuse disorder. Our demographic continues to remain diverse, and we strive to eliminate as many barriers as possible to accessing treatment. Our team re-evaluated the treatment experience for our clients and decided to give the women at Westminster House more autonomy.

Programming continues to thrive with experienced and dedicated contractors coming in on almost a daily basis to educate our clients on different avenues of wellness and healing. Music therapy, art therapy, acupuncture, yoga/fitness group, and culture group all remain fundamental elements of our treatment modality. To enhance our cultural program, we partnered with 2 Metis Women, a society dedicated to educating the public about culture. The facilitator delivers a two-hour culture group twice per month, offering workshops on medicine bags, dream catchers, nature walks, and other land-based teachings.

Time has been dedicated in developing the Client Care team, facilitating monthly teambuilding exercises, workshops, and education sessions on conceptual aspects of their job such as boundaries, self-care, and professionalism. We have undergone a shift in leadership which has fallen gently on our staff and the change has been welcomed and appreciated.



# Programs

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## YOUTH

Our Youth Program has made significant strides in enriching cultural engagement and community involvement. Central to our programming has been a strong focus on cultural education and connection, with clients actively attending local powwows and regularly visiting the Vancouver Friendship Centre for Indigenous 12-step meetings. These experiences have provided invaluable opportunities for the youth to explore and embrace Indigenous traditions, fostering a deeper sense of cultural identity and community. Through these activities, the participants have gained a greater understanding of their heritage and have formed meaningful connections with the Indigenous community.



In addition to cultural programming, the integration of our youth into the Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT) group has been a cornerstone of our approach. This incorporation has allowed participants to develop essential coping skills and emotional resilience within a supportive framework. The combination of cultural immersion and therapeutic support has created a well-rounded program that not only addresses the emotional and psychological needs of the youth but also celebrates their cultural heritage. The positive impact of these initiatives is evident in the increased confidence and community engagement observed among the participants, underscoring the success of our holistic approach over the past year.

# Food Services

**“Providing a diverse nutritional profile is essential to our clients’ ability to recover both their physical and mental wellbeing”**

The food services department delivered more positive change. New refrigeration units were purchased to help us preserve our many fresh ingredients. With these we can continue to include only the most crisp and delicious whole foods in our dishes. Providing a diverse nutritional profile is essential to our client’s ability to recover both their physical and mental wellbeing from the deficits caused in their active addiction.

As always, we make it our goal to keep things dynamic and enjoyable throughout our clients’ stay. This year we have introduced local food trucks into our routine, complete with themed back yard get-togethers. Our new monthly pizza lunch day is always a favorite, as well as our regular community engagement events throughout the seasons: events like Family Fun Day, Recovery Day, our Halloween Spooktacular, and the Holiday Open House ensure our clients develop a strong sense of community and belonging while in our care, and families have an opportunity to celebrate and connect with their loved ones in treatment.

