

# Annual Report

## 2020-2021



Connections  
Place



**MENTAL**  
**ILLNESS**  
*Wellness*

## Our Vision

Our community Clubhouse is a vibrant, innovative, and collaborative space dedicated to creating opportunity and purpose for those with mental health challenges. The Clubhouse is dedicated to nurturing respect, equality, and dignity for all.

## Our Mission

To provide people whose lives have been disrupted by mental illness the opportunity to recover meaningful and productive lives through reintegration within the workplace and the community.



*"A place for people with mental health challenges to gain confidence, respect, hope, and opportunity. We offer unique programming focused on wellness, employment, and education."*

## The Clubhouse Guarantee

- ◇ A place to come
- ◇ A right to meaningful work
- ◇ A right to meaningful relationships
- ◇ A right to a place to return



**Chris Forester**  
Executive Director  
(Outgoing)

From 'disrupting isolation by staying connected' to 'community and opportunity', the mantras of the Connections Place Clubhouse have always embodied the ethos of inclusion, belonging, hope, and possibility.

Several strategic priorities were identified as areas for the Clubhouse team to focus on, including program development, public profile and awareness building, organizational partnerships and collaborations and, of course, core sustainable funding.

Collaborations have been a high point for Connections Place Society this year. The Clubhouse team worked with Umbrella Society to partner in launching a Concurrent Outreach Support Team (COST) that addresses the need for greater support for people upon discharge from psychiatric emergency services. Another notable collaboration came to us through the Bateman Foundation to bring our members art therapy.

The work of securing core sustainable funding for the Clubhouse continues to be pushed forward through growing partnerships with the Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions and Island Health. Funders like the United Way through their #BlueLove campaign for mental health and Vic Foundation's Community Recovery Programs have been instrumental in meeting the needs of Clubhouse this year.



**Margaret Forbes**  
Executive Director  
(Incoming)

Margaret is a passionate and long-time advocate for community-based mental health supports. She has held past leadership roles within the non-profit sector including mental health services. As a community consultant, Margaret has also led numerous community-based research and evaluation projects focused on social determinants of health for individuals seeking equity in the



**Jackie Powell**  
Board Chair

During 2020/21, Connections Place has continued to adapt to the changing regulations of COVID-19. We have been a reassuring place of normalcy during this pandemic and I am grateful to our members and staff who have held steady in this trying time.

100% of our funding is dependent upon foundations, grants, and private donations and it is truly remarkable what has been accomplished. It is proof that we are a much-needed resource in our community. Partnerships in the community continue to flourish, along with a growing membership, and I am very grateful to the many people and organizations that have pulled together for our Clubhouse.

However, it is imperative that we obtain sustainable funding to enable Connections Place to continue to be this anchor in the community. Our number one goal is to be here today – and always – for our current and future members.

Our Board of Directors is a strong team that complements the Clubhouse and I am grateful to their commitment to see our Clubhouse flourish and eventually achieve accreditation through Clubhouse International. This means robust employment and housing programs and meeting all 37 International Standards.

community including those living with mental health and substance use issues.

Margaret is very excited to be taking on the role of Executive Director at Connections Place. Her primary objective for this role is to ensure continuity of the existing programs that have been so well received by the membership, and to work towards a sustainable future and the growth of this essential support for individuals living with mental illness in our community.



# Our Team



## Staff

- ◇ Margaret Forbes, Executive Director
- ◇ Louise Baert, Program Staff
- ◇ Katherine Howell, Program Staff
- ◇ Zoe Pitt, Program Staff
- ◇ Leah Ralph, COST Outreach Staff

## Board of Directors

- ◇ Jackie Powell, Chair
- ◇ Darcy Eggleston, Vice Chair
- ◇ Jeany Shipley, Treasurer
- ◇ Alex Ashby, Secretary
- ◇ Chery Lynn Brown
- ◇ Christine Culham
- ◇ Sandy McManus

## Members

With more than 230 members, the Connections Place Clubhouse has become the vibrant, innovative, and collaborative space that we hoped it would be. Nothing happens at the clubhouse without the input, contribution, and hard work of our members. It is the energy, spirit, and passion of our membership that give life to Connections Place and make this all possible. Thank you all!

# 2020-2021

## By the Numbers

1,731

Member Visits

235

Members

50

Tours

2,130

Meals Served

\$293,524

Funds Raised

This year we collaborated with:

- ◊ Umbrella Society
- ◊ Bateman Foundation
- ◊ United Way
- ◊ WorkBC

# Program Development

## COST Pilot Project

The Concurrent Outreach Support Team (COST) pilot project – created by Connections Place Society and Umbrella Society – provides comprehensive person-centered supports that attend to both an individual's addiction recovery and mental health needs.

The COST team meets with people upon discharge from hospital psychiatric emergency services to connect them to community-based mental health and addiction support programs. The goal is to increase an individual's sense of wellness and the likelihood of a successful recovery through comprehensive service provision.



## Employment Program

Ideally, a Clubhouse will offer transitional, supported, and independent employment opportunities to members. However, the pandemic brought plenty of hardships for the community including difficulty forging new and existing partnerships with employers. This year, we focused our energy on our Independent Employment program as per the interest of our membership. We developed a variety of resources for individuals seeking employment on their own accord such as drop-in worksheets and weekly workshops that rotate on a monthly basis.

For two years now, the Clubhouse has partnered with Marian Paris of Paris Roka Candy to provide meaningful, paid employment opportunities to our membership. Paris Roka offers members a living wage for weighing and packaging candy in a supportive group employment environment. Net proceeds from Paris Roka's candy sales are generously donated to the Clubhouse. Thank you Marian for your continued support and innovation with Connections Place!

## Art Therapy

This year we partnered with the Bateman Foundation to provide free art therapy to our members in the format of two 4-week art programs. Members had the opportunity to work in a variety of mediums from pastels to charcoal, and engaged in art projects such as mandalas and gratitude boxes. As several of the art sessions were held at the Bateman Gallery, members explored the gallery's exhibits free of charge which was a definite highlight.

Thank you to the Bateman Foundation for collaborating with the Clubhouse to bring unique wellness programming to our membership!



Thank you to the Sisters of Saint Anne and the founding members for establishing Connections Place here in Victoria, BC. Such a community of caring, sharing, and helping people supporting each other to bring light and goodness into our lives. Thanks so much for your support during my surgery and recovery.



Bill

I really love Connections Place since the people here are so welcoming, the food is delicious, and it is nice to converse with people.

Eva



I love the clubhouse because their coffee and sandwiches are awesome, and there's lots of joy and fun.

Anthony



The staff and overall environment is providing me with a safe place that enables me to build my trust skills and express my authentic personality.

Kevin



I really love Connections Place since the people here are so welcoming, the food is delicious, and it is nice to converse with people.

Mike



When I first came to Connections Place I was unsure as to whether I would like it here, but the staff and members made me feel so happy and at home. After that, I looked forward (very much) to coming three times a week.

Janet







## United Way's #BlueLove Campaign

United Way Greater Victoria's #BlueLove Campaign was created to support individuals in Greater Victoria struggling with mental health.

On southern Vancouver Island, COVID-19 has increased the demand for mental health services by up to 50 percent. Half of Canadians report worsening mental health due to the pandemic.

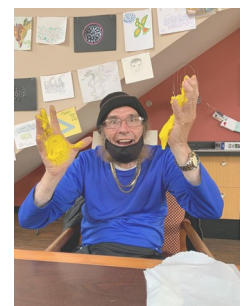
United Way Greater Victoria's goal is to raise \$1 Million by the end of 2021 to fund counselling, peer support, and outreach services across southern Vancouver Island, as well as to raise awareness of mental health and local services available to help.

Funds raised from the Blue Love Campaign will benefit mental health community partners such as Connections Place! We are grateful to be able to work with the United Way towards the fulfillment of this mission.

*"Connections Place has truly saved my life. On my hard and dark days, I know that I can come into the Clubhouse and connect with members and staff without judgement."*

- Tiffani

## Disrupting Isolation by Staying Connected







## Thank You to Our Donors!

Every donation makes a difference in building a community of recovery and wellness.

### Major Funders



### Featured Donors



with Shawn Parke

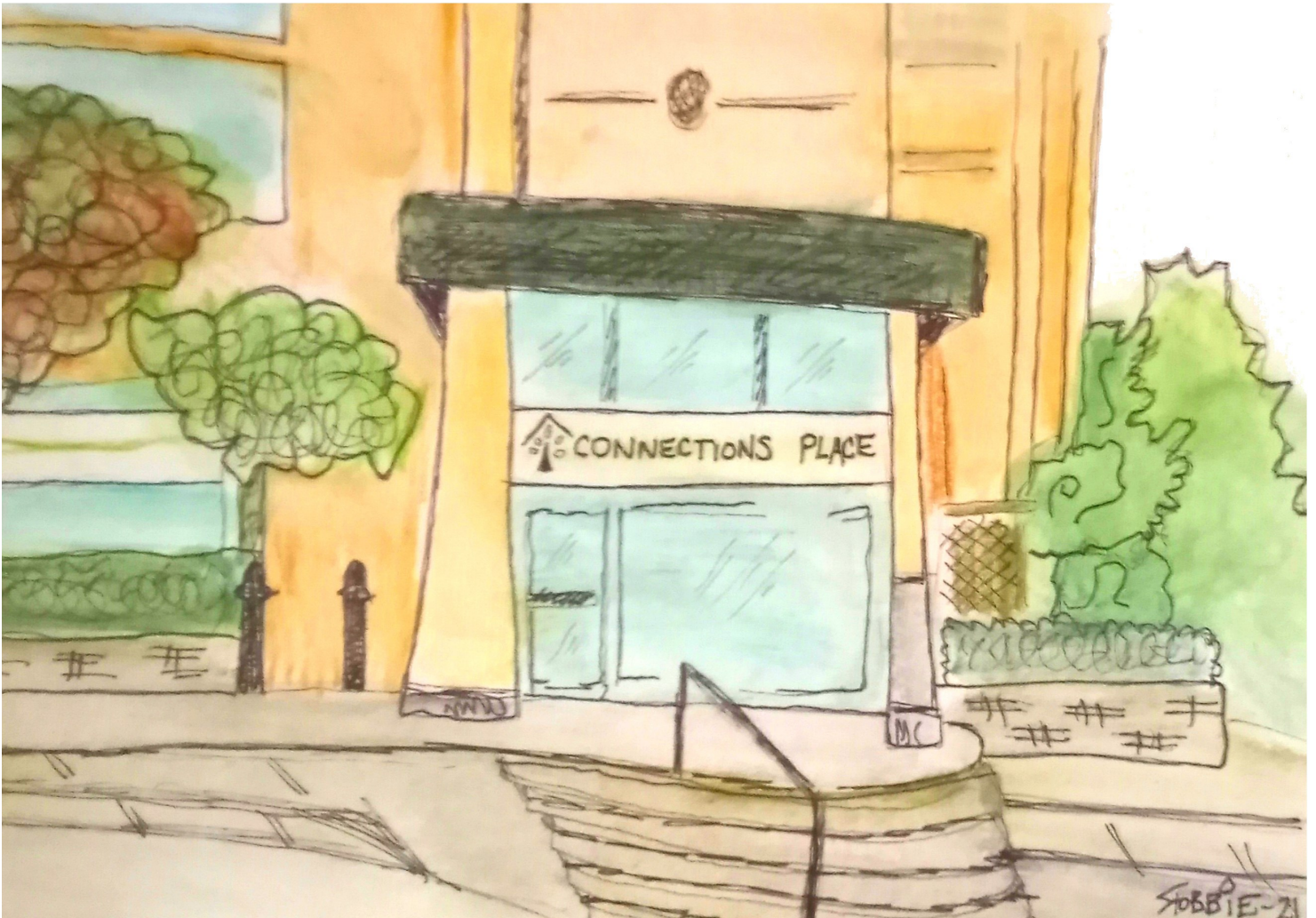


Isaiah 16  
Foundation

Michelle Cupit

### Monthly & One-Time Donors


It is with the support of our 17 monthly donors and many more one-time donors that Connections Place is able to continue to provide meaningful programs and services to our community.





## Let's Stay Connected


To learn more about Connections Place, we encourage you to book a Discovery Tour with us!

Contact us at (250) 483-3748 or [info@connectionsplace.org](mailto:info@connectionsplace.org)

 [connectionsplace.org](http://connectionsplace.org)

 [@connectionsplace](https://www.facebook.com/connectionsplace)

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