

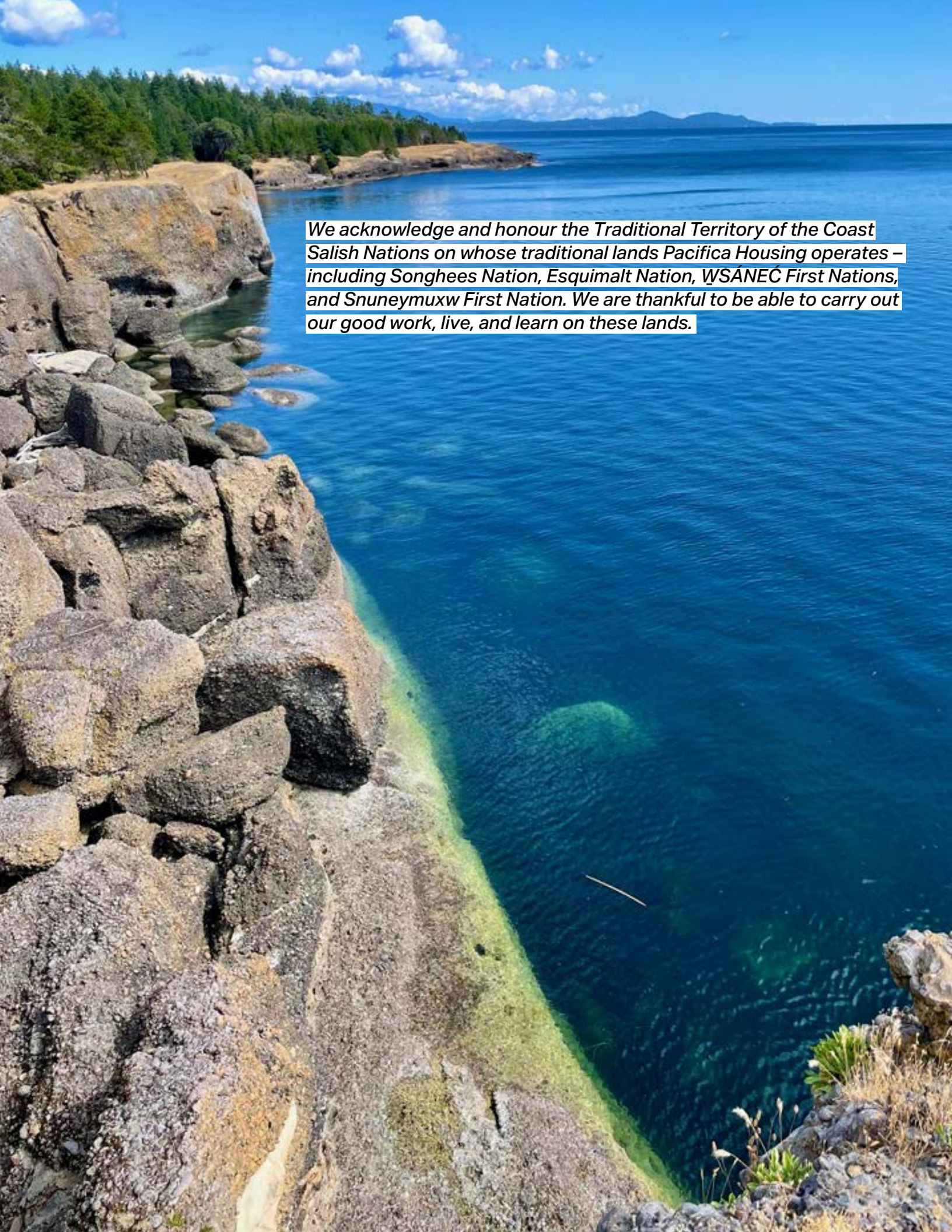
IMPACT REPORT

2023



PACIFICA HOUSING

Equitable housing in pursuit of thriving communities

A scenic view of a rocky coastline. In the foreground, large, grey, jagged rocks form a steep cliffside that meets the water. The ocean is a deep, clear blue, with a lighter greenish-blue area near the shore indicating shallow water. In the background, a forested hillside with green trees rises up, and distant mountains are visible under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image, enclosed in a white box with a black border.

We acknowledge and honour the Traditional Territory of the Coast Salish Nations on whose traditional lands Pacifica Housing operates – including Songhees Nation, Esquimalt Nation, W̱SÁNEĆ First Nations, and Snuneymuxw First Nation. We are thankful to be able to carry out our good work, live, and learn on these lands.



Cover: Pacifica Housing's newest affordable housing project, The Dalmatian. Above: Nanaimo staff represent at the 2023 Nanaimo Pride Parade.

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PACIFICA HOUSING

Equitable housing in pursuit of thriving communities

Pacifica Housing is one of Vancouver Island's largest operators and providers of affordable homes and supportive services. Through our community services programming, and with nearly 1,450 affordable homes and new developments coming in the future, we support more than 2,700 individuals and families in Greater Victoria and Nanaimo.

OUR MISSION

To advance the independence of individuals and families through equitable housing and supportive services.

OUR VISION

Equitable housing in pursuit of thriving communities.

OUR VALUES



Authenticity

Finding congruence inside and outside Pacifica Housing through open and honest speech and action.



Leadership

Courageously creating opportunities through collaboration where there were none before.



Respect

Showing that everyone has value by treating people with dignity, compassion, and unconditional kindness.



Social Justice

Challenging an unjust status quo so that everyone can enjoy fair and equitable access to their economic, political, and social rights.

A FOUNDATION OF HOUSING WITH HEART

- Lead intentionally with the principles of Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (JEDI)
- Incorporate Housing First and harm reduction approaches to supportive services
- Integrate supportive services that empower individuals as they move through the housing continuum towards independence
- Develop an intentional culture of environmental stewardship

OUR EXECUTIVE TEAM



Carolina Ibarra
Chief Executive Officer



Kayla Lilledahl
Senior Director of Supportive Services & Operations



Ryan Hube
Director of People & Culture



Gareth Duggal
Director of Finance



Shawn Hutchinson
Director of Maintenance & Operations



Ian Scott
Director of Community Real Estate & Asset Strategies



Lucy Fogden
Associate Director of Housing



Calvin Leitner
Associate Director of Strategic Initiatives

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Marnie Hill
Board Chair



James Gustafson
Vice Chair & Treasurer



Raj Sahota
Secretary



Alison Paul
Director



Sang-Kiet Ly
Director



Belinda Pyle
Director



Kyle Ryan
Director



Sarah Henderson
Director



Timothy Chu
Director



Darryl Matkaluk
Director

MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

2023 was a year of growth and impact for Pacifica Housing. One of our strategic goals is to *scale effectively and efficiently*, and that is exactly what we did. In relation to housing stock, we scaled up by adding 168 units to our housing portfolio across two sites, while we progressed in building capacity in a way that strengthened our operations and prepared us for future growth.

Of the 168 units we opened across the housing continuum, 38 are supportive housing, 91 are subsidized independent rental and 39 are market independent rental units. Notably, one of the sites provides a new housing option in a new community, giving us the opportunity to demonstrate and improve upon our community engagement efforts, while building new collaborative relationships.

Pacifica Housing also began to provide encampment outreach services with a housing focus on behalf of the City of Victoria. The purpose of these services is to help people move into homes and return parks to being just parks, rather than makeshift shelters. Our approach to this work is methodical, with a focus on long-term housing stability and positive, sustained outcomes. Importantly, this translates into immense and lasting community impact, which aligns with our vision of equitable housing in pursuit of thriving communities.

Our Victoria Downtown Outreach Housing Resources Services (DOHRS) drop-in center continues to be a vital resource for a growing community struggling to meet the ever-present demand for affordable housing. In 2023, DOHRS staff completed over 950 client housing and systems navigation assessments. DOHRS continues to offer centralized housing and financial navigation resources to clients in Greater Victoria.

Together, our teams across all departments continued to deliver remarkable results, including housing 257 people, preventing 331 evictions and engaging over 120 people in economic reintegration and psychosocial rehabilitation activities. As the need for more housing across the continuum continues to outweigh existing supply, eviction prevention support becomes ever more critical.

These achievements occurred while facing the full financial impact of cost escalation and funding delays on operating agreements. This situation led us to implement short-term solutions and longer-term changes to our revenue structure as well as step up our advocacy efforts. The 2023 financial picture did not end well, but the foundation was laid for a brighter financial future already clear by mid-2024.

Advocacy, part of our *leading in community* strategic goal, was not limited to immediate financial challenges. We also engaged in advocacy related to the preservation of older



housing stock. While there is a better understanding of what it takes to build independent-living non-market housing by all levels of government, more awareness and understanding is needed on how to protect aging non-market housing.

I joined colleagues from across Victoria and then the Province in calling for more and safer supportive housing. Supportive housing is a little understood section of the housing continuum, which has rapidly changed to meet the complexity of client needs. We acknowledge our colleagues, partners and funders who have participated in the hard conversations and demonstrated courage and leadership. We all keep showing up for the tough conversations. Along with results-oriented action, this is what lasting change is made of.

Sincerely,

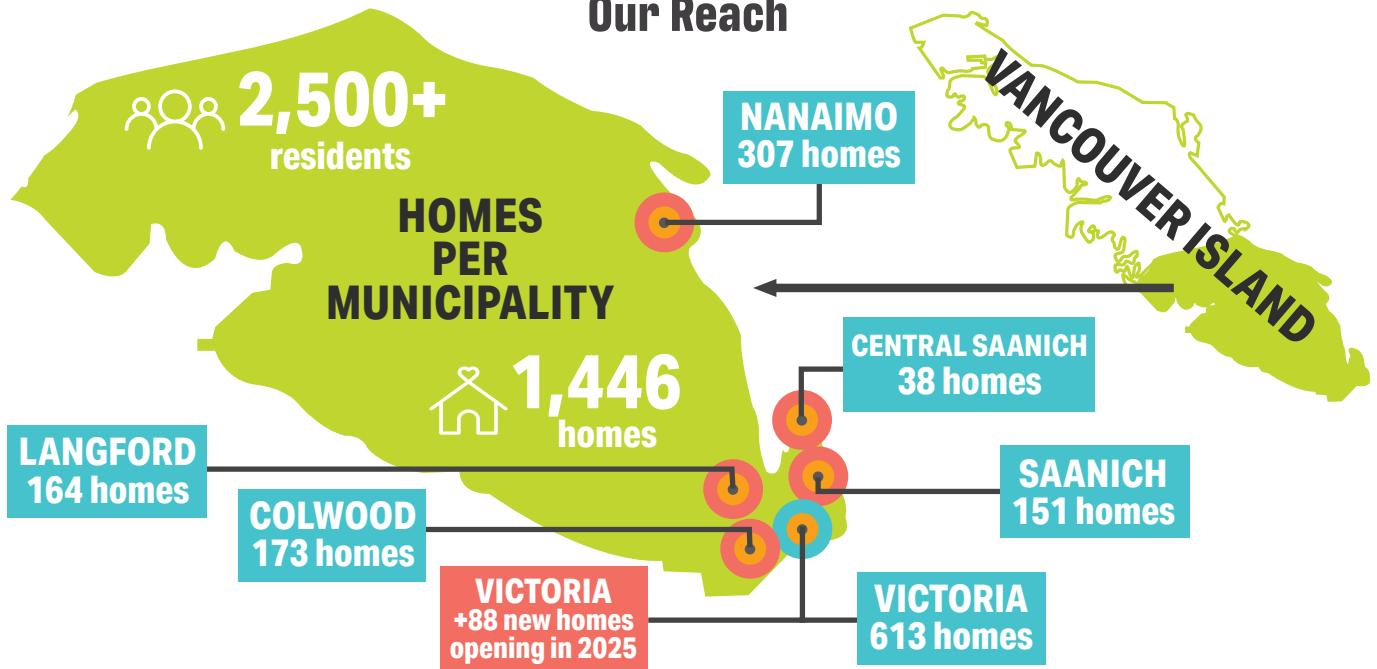
A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carolina Ibarra". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional style.

Carolina Ibarra
CEO, Pacifica Housing

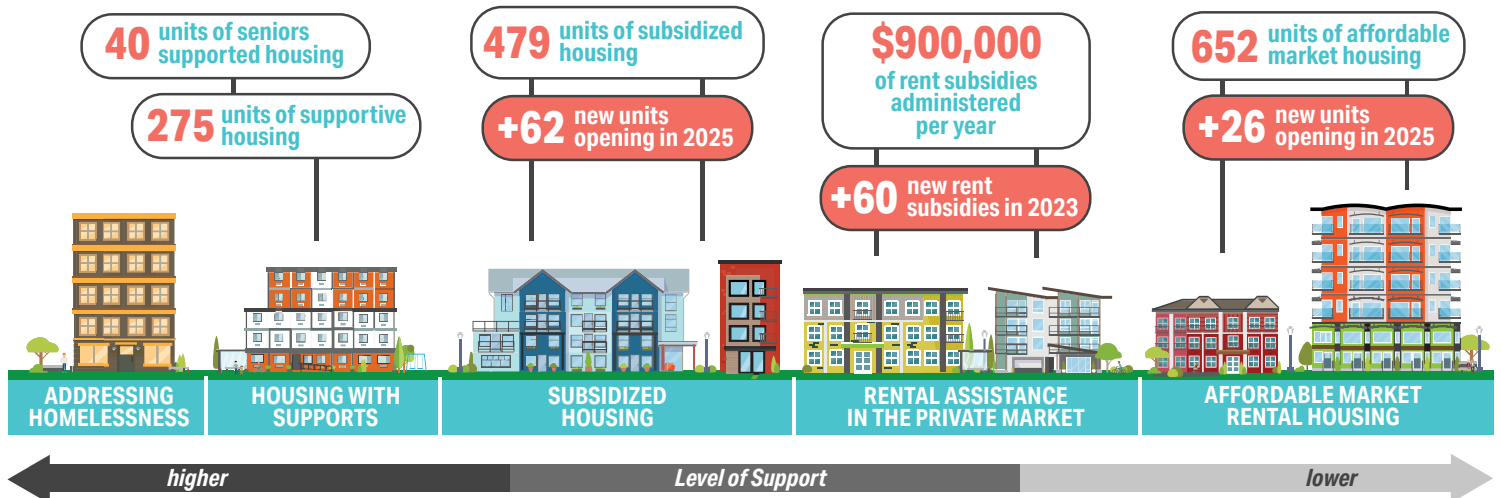
EQUITABLE HOUSING IN PURSUIT OF THRIVING COMMUNITIES

2023 was a significant year, as Pacifica Housing’s portfolio of homes grew in several key categories, providing equitable housing and supportive services options for people at multiple entry points in Greater Victoria and Nanaimo. The opening of *The Dalmatian* in February added 91 units of subsidized housing and 39 units of affordable market housing, while the opening of *The Aurora* in May increased the organization’s supportive housing units by 38.

Our Reach



Opening More Units across the Housing Continuum



130 UNITS OF NEW AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING OPENS IN DOWNTOWN VICTORIA

GREATER VICTORIA



Right: (L to R) David Jawl, MLA Grace Lore, Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon, Pacifica Housing CEO Carolina Ibarra and Victoria Mayor Marianne Alto pose for a photo.

The opening of Pacifica Housing’s newest affordable rental building, The Dalmatian, started 2023 off in a good way, as the Resident Services team began welcoming residents in February. People qualifying for subsidized rates, who are in core housing need, were prioritized in the tenanting process.

The Dalmatian is the first of its kind in Victoria. Located above the new Victoria Fire Hall No.1, the eight-storey building consists of 130 affordable homes and is a combination of studio, one, two and three-bedroom homes, including seven accessible/adaptable suites. The development is the result of a partnership between the City of Victoria, the Province, Dalmatian Developments (Jawl Residential Developments) and Pacifica Housing. This non-smoking building also houses the City of Victoria’s very first emergency center, designed to withstand a massive earthquake. It meets BC Building Code standards for buildings designed to remain operable following a disaster.

Building features for residents include double high-speed elevators, a multipurpose community room, a dog run and outdoor landscaped area, a small playground, and more than 190 bike racks secured in the parkade. All suites feature in-suite laundry.

Two open houses acknowledging the grand opening were held on April 27th, beginning with staff and residents in the afternoon, followed by an evening event attended by community stakeholders from the Capital Region. Guests had the opportunity to tour the building as well as enjoy refreshments in The Dalmatian’s fifth floor common room, while taking in some fantastic views of Downtown Victoria.

On May 1st, we welcomed government officials and media - including Housing Minister Ravi Kahlon - to announce this unique addition to affordable housing in Victoria. The Minister reiterated the Province’s commitment to increasing the availability of affordable housing.

“We are taking action to build affordable rental housing in Victoria and across British Columbia” said Mr. Kahlon. “The opening of The Dalmatian shows we are delivering homes people need, with much more to come.”

“The Dalmatian is a beautiful and affordable family-friendly rental building. It is a testament to how affordable housing can enhance a community and the creative solutions that partnerships can deliver.”
- Carolina Ibarra, CEO Pacifica Housing

Other notable officials speaking at the event included Marianne Alto, Mayor of Victoria, Grace Lore, MLA for Victoria-Beacon Hill, Carolina Ibarra, Pacifica Housing CEO, and David Jawl from Jawl Residential Developments. All echoed a message of the desperate need for more affordable housing and the value of partnerships in finding creative solutions to the housing crisis.

Pacifica Housing would like to acknowledge the Province, through BC Housing, for funding The Dalmatian project through the *Building BC: Community Housing Fund*. BC Housing also contributes ongoing annual operating funding.

BUILDING NEW HOMES: Introducing ‘The Dalmatian’



The Dalmatian consists of studio, one bedroom, two bedroom and three bedroom homes conveniently located to nearby transit routes, and downtown amenities.

<p>130 new homes</p> 	<p>26 homes for people with very low incomes</p>	<p>65 homes for people with low to moderate incomes at rent-geared-to-income rates</p>	<p>39 homes for people with middle-incomes</p>
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Introducing ‘The Ferns’ GREATER VICTORIA

The Ferns is a new development of 88 new units of affordable housing in the Burnside Gorge neighbourhood of Victoria. The Ferns consists of two apartment buildings, a shared courtyard and green space, a child care center with daycare and after-school care programming, and a community use space for School District 61.

This project is the result of collaboration between the City of Victoria, School District 61 and Pacifica Housing, where these surplus lands have been provided for the development of The Ferns. The project is made possible with funding from government, including the BC Housing Community Housing Fund, City of Victoria Affordable Housing Fund and ChildCareBC New Spaces Fund.

By the end of 2023, significant progress was made on the project, as construction was 70% complete. Key progress included underground parking, courtyard level grading, and most of the mechanical equipment at the parkade level installed, including the fully electric and heat pump powered centralized hot water system.

The Ferns is scheduled to be ready for the first residents in early 2025.



88 new homes under construction

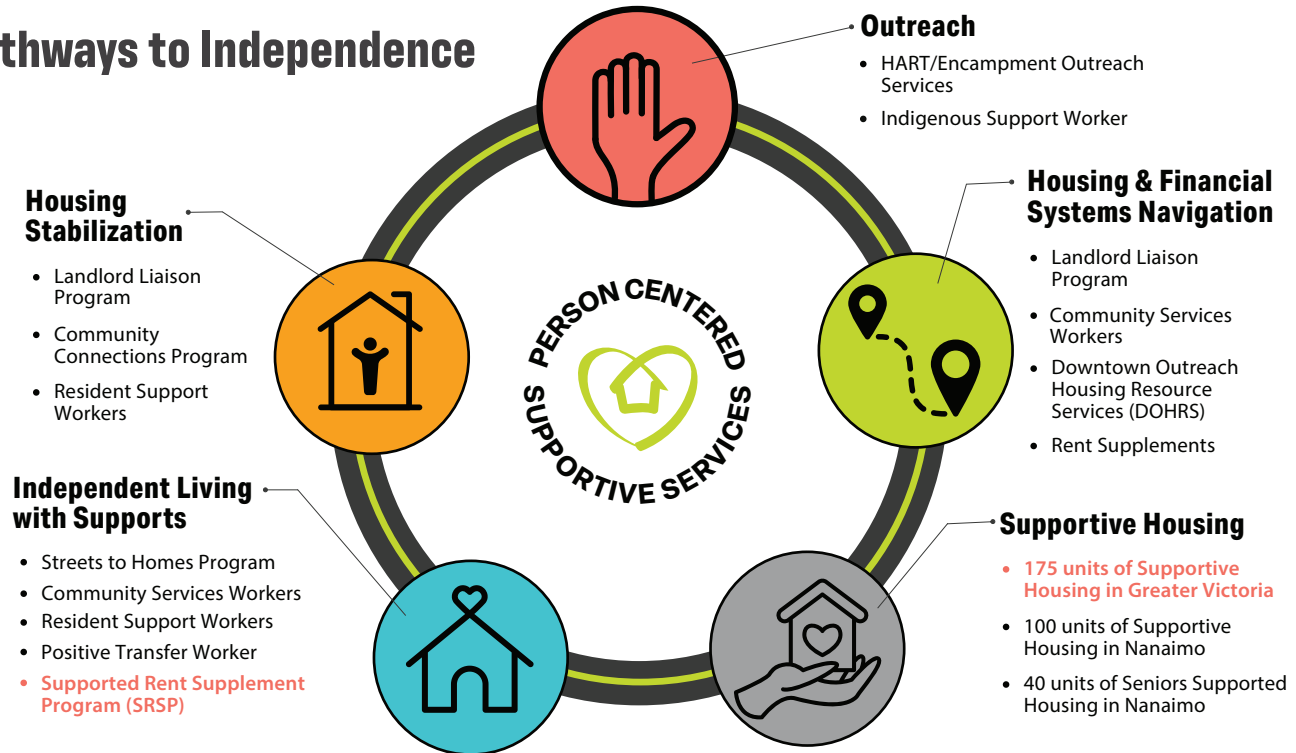



<p>THE FERNS UNIT MIX:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 bachelor units • 34 one bedroom units • 26 two bedroom units • 20 three bedroom units 	<p>18 homes for people with very low incomes</p>	<p>44 homes for people with low to moderate incomes at rent-geared-to-income rates</p>	<p>26 homes for people with middle-incomes</p>
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ADVANCING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

With care and compassion, our Supportive Services teams collaborate with clients in a person-centered, trauma-informed way that emphasizes safety, trustworthiness, choice, connection, collaboration, strengths and skill building. A person-centered approach allows participants greater responsibility over decision-making and care planning.

Pathways to Independence



Downtown Outreach Housing Resources Services: Housing and Financial Systems Navigation GREATER VICTORIA

Once again, our Downtown Outreach Housing Resources Services (DOHRS) drop-in center assisted hundreds of people in accessing financial support systems and finding and retaining housing. In 2023, high rental costs and low vacancy rates persisted as the main challenges to accessing housing within the private market for most DOHRS clients. The number of seniors accessing DOHRS for services continues to rise, as many are finding themselves in search of housing due to landlord use of property and/or property sales, or renovation. It can be quite shocking for seniors to discover how the rental market has changed since they last looked for housing, and how little they can afford. Consequently, DOHRS staff are supporting more seniors with completing subsidy applications such as SAFER and GIS in order to improve the affordability of housing options available to our elderly clients.

958
Clients provided with housing & systems navigation assessments

373
Clients actively supported by DOHRS staff

352
Landlord Liaison referrals

115
Evictions prevented by Landlord Liaison & DOHRS staff

70
Clients assisted in securing new homes

Our Landlord Liaison and DOHRS staff worked diligently to prevent a significant number of evictions from happening this year. With the lack of affordable housing options available, eviction prevention has become more important than ever in preventing further instances of homelessness. Additionally, the DOHRS team supported a growing number of drop-in clients with assistance arranging viewings, signing documents, navigating move-in/move-out processes, securing funds for housing start-up costs such as security deposits, rent, utility set-up costs, basic supplies and furnishings, and community orientation and support “settling-in”.

In the fall of 2023, Pacifica Housing was awarded a contract to administer additional rent supplements via our Community Services team to assist households struggling to maintain their independent housing due to economic or health challenges. These rent supplements also layer non-clinical supports and access to clinical services to support housing stability independently in community. Of note, access to these rent supplements with supportive services has allowed Pacifica Housing to grow the Community Services department in the Nanaimo region.

Many of the people we serve face multiple barriers to maintaining housing stability in an independent-living setting. Our Community Services team works diligently to create new housing opportunities for clients and support long lasting and stable tenancies in community.

Community Connections Program

The Community Connections program provides non-medical case management services to those requiring support to stabilize and maintain their tenancies within Pacifica Housing's portfolio of independent living homes.



174

Program referrals



302

Residents served (including youth, children & seniors)



72

Evictions prevented



\$10,246

distributed to support basic needs



\$12,685

distributed to support household set-up activities



\$10,312

distributed to support prevention & shelter diversion activities

Encampment Outreach

Pacifica Housing's Encampment Outreach team engages with people living in encampments and sheltering on the streets, with the purpose of helping them find housing. This includes Parks Relocation and multi-agency Housing Action Response Team (HART) services, such as:



Completing housing applications, updating BC Housing files, advocacy with other agencies, resource referrals, financial navigation assistance and assessments for housing placements



35

Encampments served



283

Individuals were engaged with via our HART & Parks Relocation teams

Streets to Homes Program

The Streets to Homes program helps individuals with a history of chronic and/or episodic homelessness secure and maintain permanent housing, including a rent subsidy and supportive services to promote long-term housing stability.



93

Program clients



93

Participated in social or economic integration services



144

Evictions prevented



9

Clients stably housed for over 3 years



48

Clients stably housed for over 5 years



9

Clients stably housed for over 10 years



\$9,100

distributed to support basic needs



\$9,137

distributed to support household set-up activities



\$10,913

distributed to support prevention & shelter diversion activities

Positive Transfer Program

Pacifica Housing's Positive Transfer Worker collaborates with other local agencies, on behalf of their clients and caseworkers, to support those transitioning to independent-living situations from supportive housing or shelters.



28

Program clients



24

In Pacifica Housing buildings



4

In CRD housing

ENCAMPMENT OUTREACH: MEETING PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE AT

GREATER VICTORIA

The number of people seeking shelter in Victoria city parks has become a visible representation of the housing crisis. Encampments are not a solution to homelessness but a tragic survival mechanism many resort to, given a lack of affordable housing options.

In August 2023, in an effort to better support those sheltering in parks, the City of Victoria engaged Pacifica Housing to provide encampment outreach with a housing focus, with the goal to move unhoused individuals out of the parks and into permanent housing.

Over a period of six months, members of Pacifica Housing's Community Services team focused their efforts on individuals sheltering in Stadacona, Topaz, Regatta Point, and Hollywood parks. Sandie Mashon, Assistant Manager of Community Services led this project, bringing with her nearly 20 years of outreach experience and a knack for finding the right housing fit for those experiencing multiple barriers to housing stability.

The approach Sandie takes is a holistic one. It begins with a vulnerability assessment to identify the individual's housing needs, as well as potential barriers that may exist. Through these assessments, Sandie gains insight on the context around each individual's history of chronic homelessness, including health and other resources they may need assistance connecting to, and the type of housing most appropriate for the individual, in order to attain better long-term outcomes.

From there she gets to work looking for housing opportunities – a daunting undertaking during a housing crisis – to find the “right fit” for their needs.

With this approach, Sandie's encampment outreach led to housing 10 individuals from city parks between August and November 2023. Some moved into supportive housing, while others moved into subsidized rental units in various Pacifica Housing buildings. “They've all been great fits” Sandie says, “because of the assessments we do and the relationships we've built, they've just fit in so well.”

Understanding where people are coming from and meeting them where they are at is a vital component of this work. Sandie genuinely seeks to understand each person she interacts with and recognizes this approach as a critical component in beginning to build trusting relationships that lead to long-term, positive outcomes and the chance to thrive. Through doing this work, Sandie has come to have a deep understanding and compassion for those who are houseless. She also recognizes how challenging moving back inside can be for someone.



“When people are sheltering in the parks they are connected to teams assisting them in finding housing and offering other supports. Often when they move inside these supports don't continue to follow them and that change can feel overwhelming. We like to offer transitional support to ensure they are successful in their housing long-term.”

**– Sandie Mashon
Assistant Manager, Community Services**



City of Victoria Encampment Outreach with a Housing Focus

IMPACT STATS

10

Individuals housed between August & November 2023

It's estimated that Sandie has housed over 1,000 individuals throughout her time with Pacifica Housing.

When asked what the most challenging part of the job is, Sandie is fast to respond: “not being able to get folks into supportive housing. There just aren't enough vacancies.”

Despite this, Sandie ends the interview sounding hopeful: “You know the saying it takes a village to raise a child? Well, it takes a village – and a community – to end homelessness. Everybody's got to work together. And we are. So many agencies and individuals are working together.”

Oscar has called the city of Victoria home his whole life. However, in his 62 years he never imagined living in one of its many parks, until he lost his housing in 2023.

When asked about how he ended up living in a park and not the home he had owned for years, Oscar cites health challenges as the driving factor. It all began when he became ill during the pandemic, resulting in a four-month hospital stay and a diagnosis of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease.

That combined with chronic gastrointestinal bleeding, anemia, and ICU Syndrome from spending so long in the Intensive Care Unit meant that Oscar was unable to continue his 45-year career as a carpenter.

With the small income he received for being on disability assistance, and in very poor health, Oscar eventually lost his home.

He went to live with his mother in a small one-bedroom apartment, sleeping on her couch. “I was with my mum because I had nowhere else to stay. But it is only a one bedroom – and you can’t live on someone’s couch forever,” recalls Oscar.

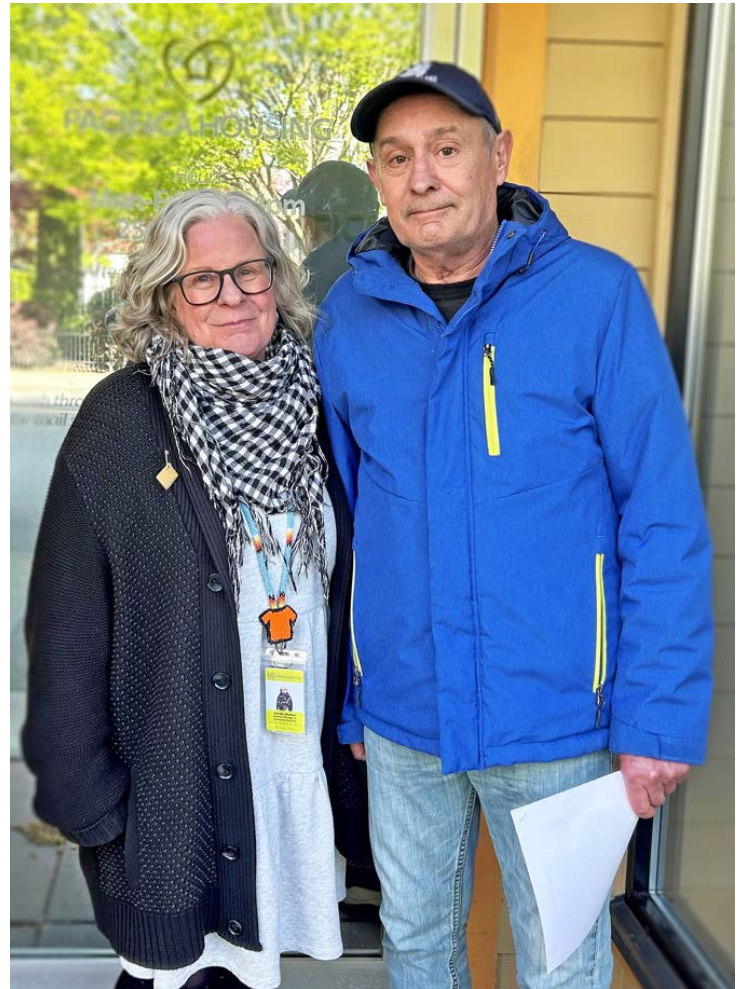
He had not been living outside for long compared to some, spending a total of two and a half months in various parks when City of Victoria Bylaw Officers found him; the Officers helped Oscar relocate, as overnight camping is prohibited where he was. “They actually helped me move. They picked up all the stuff and helped me put my tent back up...Bylaw has been really good,” Oscar explained.

“They were the ones that got me in touch with [Pacifica Housing].”

Oscar first met with Sandie from the Pacifica Housing Community Services team during a cold snap. They met at a coffee shop to do an initial assessment of his needs and discuss where might be the best fit for him to live. It was determined that Oscar did not require a supportive housing site placement, so Sandie and the Community Services team set out to find him a subsidized rental unit in one of Pacifica Housing’s independent living buildings.

Things moved fast and before Oscar knew it, he had a move-in date for his new home.

He settled into his new home quickly and since then Oscar’s health has begun to stabilize. Pacifica Housing’s Community



“I’m very grateful for what Sandie has done for me - in fact the entire staff... if I ever need anything, I just have to ask.”

**- Oscar
Pacifica Housing resident**

Services team is even assisting him with looking for part time work, much to his excitement. “I HAVE to have something to do... also, what they give us [on disability assistance] is not much,” states Oscar.

Even now that he has moved inside, Oscar still visits his unhoused friends in the park. He views the atmosphere there as a community built out of necessity, with everybody looking out for one another. “When I was at the park the youngest person was 52, and the oldest was 73,” remembers Oscar.

When asked to describe what the first night in his new home was like, Oscar’s face lights up. “It felt like home the first day,” he beamed. “Now I have my independence back. I can come and go when I want, I can eat when I want, go to the bathroom when I want – have a shower... just the basics of life. If I was still at Irving Park, I probably wouldn’t be in Irving Park, I would be in the hospital or worse.”

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

GREATER VICTORIA & NANAIMO

Supportive housing provides safe and affordable housing for adults who are in a cycle of chronic homelessness and face multiple challenges and barriers to sustaining independent housing. Our housing support teams are present to offer person centered supports that hold residents capable. Once individuals have their housing needs met, it is easier to focus on developing individual case plans that can address other needs, primarily related to health, cultural supports, employment supports and basic needs such as food and clothing. Pacifica Housing works diligently to broker clinical supports for program participants alongside the non-clinical supports our supportive housing teams offer. Our Supportive Housing teams also provide on-site community programs that empower and support our residents, including social and recreational activities to promote community engagement, community meals to enhance food security and volunteer opportunities to gain work experience.



The Aurora Opens in Central Saanich

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING: GREATER VICTORIA

On June 2, 2023, we welcomed neighbours and community partners to an open house at the newest supportive housing site we operate, The Aurora, in Central Saanich. Over the course of the day, well over 100 individuals came to see the beautiful new building and learn more about supportive housing.

Among those in attendance were members of Central Saanich City Council and representatives from other departments in the District. We also welcomed many community partners, including BC Housing, who purchased and opened the building, Tsawout First Nation, local church groups, and community organizations, who took the opportunity to tour the new building and connect with Pacifica Housing staff.



District of Central Saanich staff and council at the Aurora open house in June.

Residents began to move into The Aurora in late May 2023, with Pacifica Housing taking a measured approach to occupancy of the new building. This allows residents to integrate into their new homes and work with staff to connect to resources that advance their individual support plans. This process recognizes that The Aurora is a new environment for residents and it takes time for staff to foster and build these individual relationships in support of long-term, successful outcomes.

The building owner, BC Housing, has made a commitment to prioritize people at risk of homelessness who are from the Central Saanich region. Additionally, Pacifica Housing is committed to 35% Indigenous occupancy and is working with local Nations on the Saanich Peninsula to maintain this goal.

Pacifica Housing has worked with BC Housing to establish a Community Advisory Committee (CAC). CAC's are a key part of how we ensure that supportive housing buildings integrate

83 units for people with very low incomes who require supports

- Daily meal program
- Onsite health services
- Cultural resources
- Onsite support staff

well into their neighbourhoods, and our experience is that they have been very effective at helping communities work together to address concerns and endure a positive connection with neighbours. Three Central Saanich community members have joined the CAC, with the first meeting having taken place in August 2023. The Aurora CAC also includes representation from BC Housing, the District of Central Saanich, Central Saanich Fire Department, Central Saanich Police Service, Central Saanich Bylaws and Pacifica Housing. In recognition of the 51 unit Capital Region Housing Corporation (CRHC) building co-located on the same site, the CRHC has also joined the CAC.

Onsite supports include Housing Support Workers, a Life Skills Worker and an In-Reach Worker. A daily meal program includes daily continental breakfast service and access to a robust food pantry for another daily meal.

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As each unit has its own kitchen and there is no commercial-grade kitchen on-site, staff ensures the food pantry – which contains dry goods, fresh and frozen items – is stocked/maintained weekly.

Program management has also established additional clinical health and cultural resources for program participants. These include on-site health services via Cool Aid Society's (Island Health) Mobile Health Clinic and bi-weekly doctor visits from a Saanich Peninsula Health Clinic doctor to provide complex medical care, write prescriptions, and connect program participants with a social worker as needed. The local Indigenous Outreach Team (Island Health) offers bi-weekly on-site programming such as healing ceremony, smudging, peer support, individual counselling and drop-in group activities.

Additionally, the Community Volunteer Program encourages resident participation within Pacifica Housing's supportive housing buildings and the local community – fostering a sense

of pride in their home and surroundings. Aurora residents can sign up for a task to do at the building or immediate surrounding area to contribute to the general cleanliness and presentation of the site/neighborhood in exchange for an honorarium. This program works to strengthen individuals' life skills, while providing an incentive to support community development and being a good neighbour.



Left: Staff prepare daily continental breakfast. Right: The Aurora courtyard.

Partnerships and Barrier-Free Access to Healthcare Leads to Positive Outcomes in Supportive Housing

IMPACT STORY: SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

GREATER VICTORIA



From left to right: Dr. Kate Evans, Tessa Whitehouse and Collette Evans.

Pacifica Housing's supportive housing programs aim to advance the independence of residents through connections to supports that meet their basic needs. While the types of supports may be progressive, often the first connections must be health and wellness to help individuals reach their self-determined goals around housing. Pacifica Housing often achieves this through partnerships with other community organizations. Our teams work diligently to promote clinical supports for residents alongside the non-clinical supports Pacifica Housing staff offer in supportive housing. This approach is exemplified by The Aurora's connection to the Victoria Cool Aid Society's (Cool Aid) Mobile Health Team.

Dr. Kate Evans is one of several health care providers operating out of Cool Aid Community Health Centre's mobile clinics –

fully functioning clinics - supported by Telus Health for Good, that travel throughout Greater Victoria offering barrier-free healthcare to those who are precariously housed, homeless, and/or challenged by complex mental health and substance use issues.

As a physician who has been practicing medicine on the Saanich Peninsula for close to 20 years, Dr. Evans was drawn to this partnership because of the unique and essential service it was providing in the area – and the alignment to her current work through the Saanich Peninsula Outreach Team (SPOT) – a project that provides accessible medical care to vulnerable populations on the Peninsula.

Coming out to The Aurora weekly is the mobile clinic's first opportunity to visit individuals living on the Saanich Peninsula. This is not insignificant, as access to medical care is particularly challenging due to limited public transit and no walk-in clinics in the area. For individuals with substance use disorder, mental health challenges, or disability - being connected to a health care team and being able to get to your appointments is particularly tricky.

“It's so refreshing as a physician to see people who do face very significant health issues, but be able to get to them early...often we're at the other end, at the tragic end. This way we are catching things early and we are able to reverse things. Here you are seeing people on a regular basis, and can intervene before things get really dire,” states Dr. Evans.

(Continues on page 15)

(Continued from page 14)

Dr. Evans recognizes the challenges that vulnerable patients face in the broader community, and how a system like the one set up at The Aurora negates many of those challenges. “In a traditional medical practice, patients have to keep their appointments and it’s a new patient every 15 minutes. Here it’s much more taking people as they are and meeting people where they are at.”

“I really am so impressed with the community atmosphere here at The Aurora. It’s really beautiful and it’s really inspiring. The staff treat everyone like family; non-judgmentally, compassionately. [The staff] set that atmosphere, the tone, and then that’s what the residents respond to.”

- Dr. Kate Evans

“It’s amazing to see people in their own environment, with the support workers to help them. It’s really a dream to come out here with this van outfitted with everything you need to provide medical care on the spot. The amazing [Cool-Aid]

nurses and [Pacifica Housing] support workers... it really makes my job easy,” says Dr. Evans.

There is no denying the impact that access to medical care and housing can have on a person, but what about the impact this can have on the community as a whole? Dr. Evans made sure to point out that “If we are looking at costs to the medical system and community – first of all, there are much higher rates of ER visits, hospitalization and chronic health conditions in individuals who have faced the sorts of trauma that many of the people living in this building have faced... So, if you think about getting ahead of those medical issues, it’s going to save the whole system and community tons of money and resources.”

The Aurora may not be Pacifica Housing’s first supportive housing site; however, aspects of the site make it a unique and special place. It is a fantastic example of how a purpose-built building with the right supports, including medical care, can make all the difference; especially when, at the heart of it all, are compassionate staff who are onsite 24/7 fostering community.

Regaining Housing Independence with Some Helping Hands

IMPACT STORY: SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

NANAIMO

Jay has come a long way from a time he describes as “lighting fires under the bridge to stay warm” – a journey he credits in part to the time he spent living at the Pacifica Housing-operated supportive housing site, Nikao. The site, consisting of four modular buildings constructed using shipping containers, was built to help house some of the 300+ residents of *Discontent City* - a large homeless encampment that formed in downtown Nanaimo in 2018.

Jason L, who was a Pacifica Housing Mobile Outreach Worker at the time, met Jay on the day Nikao opened. “We were moving everybody over to Nikao in a big bus; Jay and his partner were part of that group,” shares Jason L. “I was very connected to both Jay and his partner. I was the one taking them to family court, transporting Jay to other meetings, and even getting them to supervised visits with their son.”

The relationships Jay built with Jason L, other support staff, and residents are what Jay remembers most about his time living at Nikao. “My favorite part about Nikao was the workers for sure,” says Jay. “They were the only thing that kept my sanity. Next to that would be the fellow residents; there was a ‘street fam vibe’, a real community. I can’t praise enough on what the support systems [I worked with did] throughout my journey... they got me here – not just me – and I can’t thank them enough. No words to describe it, just very grateful.”

(Continues on page 16)



From left to right: former Nikao resident Jay, his son and mother Shannon.

(Continued from page 15)

Jay’s biggest barrier to maintaining housing security was his substance use, which was exacerbated by having no fixed address. “Getting my kid back was a major motivator,” recalls Jay. “That and then just the support from all the workers [at Nikao]. Even from some of the homeless friends that I had – they would give encouraging words ... and it just sunk in and set, and I was a man with a plan.”

Part of that plan was finding a job – something Jay was able to focus on after finding a home at Nikao. For Jay, having a job was a key piece of his journey to stability; it helped keep him focused and got him reintegrated into the larger community. “My job - it was my therapy, so to speak,” acknowledged Jay.

Nine months after moving into Nikao – with the help of his job, newfound sobriety, and the support staff at Nikao – Jay and his partner made the move to Riverbend, a Pacifica Housing subsidized townhouse complex. It was a big move, which gave them both greater independence and the opportunity to spend more time with their son.

“Moving from Nikao was nerve-wracking honestly,” remembers Jay. “I was so used to the Nikao scene that the real world was kind of surreal and new again. The freedom was awesome though, it got me back into a positive routine. That’s when the visits with my son got longer, and we started doing sleepovers.”

Jay and his partner remained living at Riverbend for almost two years before they parted ways, with Jay moving on to another Pacifica Housing subsidized housing property on his own.

“Sobriety; that was my number one barrier. Resources – that was my number two, and lastly, getting my kid back... those are the only things that challenged my housing security, and those are all in check now.”

Through all of this, Jay remained in contact with Jason L, who eventually transitioned into a new role as a Resident Support Worker, now assisting individuals living in Pacifica Housing’s independent living buildings. There, Jason L began working with Jay again, until 2023 when Jay further progressed towards housing independence by moving into an affordable market rental unit with another non-profit housing provider.

Having been a consistent part of Jay’s housing journey, Jason L recalls the sheer will and perseverance Jay seemed to possess. “System navigation is tough to do on your own; you have to really want it,” states Jason L. “And Jay did.”


So, where is Jay now? “In the best place I’ve been ever,” says Jay. “I couldn’t have imagined it could be this good, or even begin to think that I could be anywhere close to the setup I have now.”


ABOUT NIKAO




66 units of Low Barrier Transitional Housing for high acuity individuals who face multiple barriers to maintaining housing stability in an independent setting

 **39**
Residents have moved on to programs that better suit their needs after stabilizing since 2018. This is referred to as Positive Transfer

 **12**
Residents have moved on to different housing programs (long-term care or independent living) in the past 2 years

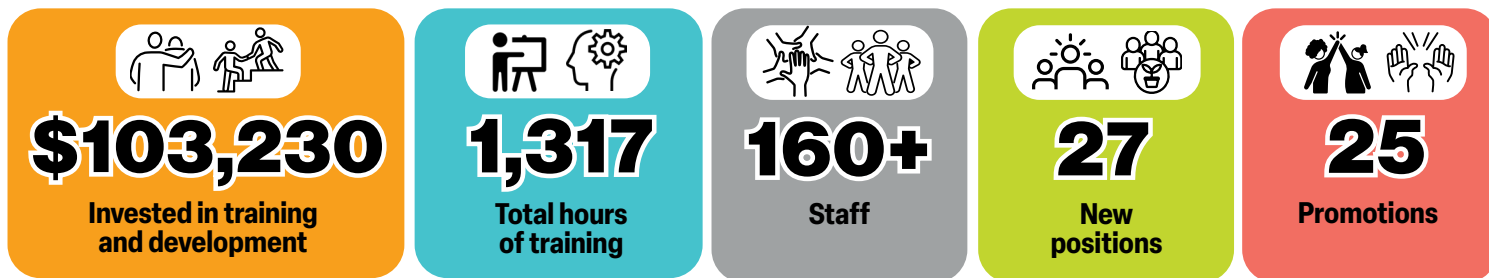
 **23**
Current residents who likely require permanent support have been stably housed for 5+ years

 **5**
Residents went to treatment and did not return to supportive housing in the past 2 years

“I got a taste of homelessness and I didn’t like it. So, with helping hands at Nikao, and motivation from those helping hands, I navigated back to the right path. There were a lot of helpful and considerate people surrounding me. I’m so blessed for that. Because it wouldn’t have happened on my own – I know that for a fact.”
– Jay
Former Nikao Resident

INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE 📍 GREATER VICTORIA & NANAIMO

In 2023, we invested in fostering cohesion through connection, collaboration and training in support of our efforts to lead with equitable and culturally appropriate housing and programming. In-house investments in train-the-trainer certification for Non-Violent Crisis Intervention and Mental Health First Aid courses expanded the organization’s training capacity and promoted peer-to-peer training.



As an equity, living wage employer, Pacifica Housing is committed to having a diverse and inclusive team reflective of the communities we serve, recognizing the intersectionality of historically marginalized populations in core housing need. As such, the organization has committed to annual diversity surveys to track/monitor our staff composition to see where we can improve. Below is an overview of our 2023 diversity survey:

- 17% of staff identify as Indigenous, Metis or Inuit
- 29% identify as part of the LGBTQIA2S+ community
- 29% identify as a person with lived experience of domestic violence
- 9% identify as a person with lived experience of substance misuse
- 21% identify as being in recovery
- 15% have lived experience of homelessness



L to R: Staff at the 2023 Victoria Pride Parade; 2023 staff appreciation awards in Nanaimo; and, staff of the Victoria maintenance team at the Summer Staff Social.

Taking Steps Towards Embedding Decolonization and Reconciliation

In February and March 2023, 21 Pacifica Housing staff in a variety of positions and departments participated in a Community of Practice (COP) to support Decolonization and Reconciliation activities within the organization. The COP sessions were facilitated by an Indigenous Consultant, where different aspects of the organization, including policy and procedure, education and training, and community engagement were discussed through a decolonized lens. Having an open dialogue outside of a colonial structure proved to be incredibly powerful and effective in unpacking some of the challenges we face as individuals in this sector, as well as an organization as a whole.



L to R: Elder Henry Chipps from Sc'ianew (Beecher Bay) First Nation and Raymond Jones Peter, Knowledge Keeper of Quw'utsun (Cowichan) First Nation, speak to staff.



CAPITAL PROJECTS GREATER VICTORIA

In June 2023, Pacifica Housing began a significant energy retrofit at the 54 unit Tamarack Close in Colwood, thanks to funding from BC Housing’s Capital Renewal Fund. This energy retrofit project supports the transition to more energy efficient systems. This focus on energy efficiency reflects the organization’s five-year strategic plan that places emphasis on combating the effects of climate change. Not only will the upgrades significantly lower the energy use of the townhouse complex, it will also provide air conditioning to residents, helping them stay safe and cool during summer heat wave temperatures that are a result of the climate crisis.

Environmental Stewardship: Tamarack Close Retrofit (Colwood, BC)



An efficient ductless split heat pump system also provides air conditioning.

Project Scope:



Total Project Budget: \$5.58 Million

- » Installation of hybrid hot water tanks that include an integrated air source heat pump along with a more traditional electric element. A hybrid hot water tank uses 3 to 4 times less energy than a typical electric hot water tank.
- » Installation of a ductless split heat pump system into common areas and bedrooms to provide efficient winter heating, but also summer air conditioning.
- » Installation of Energy Recovery Ventilator (ERV) to take advantage of existing ductwork (used by the gas furnace system) to remove stale air from the home and supply a steady supply of fresh air. The ERV transfers a significant portion of heat from the outgoing air to the incoming fresh air to reduce energy losses from the building.

Project Completion Date: >>>> Summer 2024

Tamarack Close Residents Looking Forward to Upgrades

IMPACT STORY: HOUSING



Diane, a resident at Tamarack Close, moved into her unit over 20 years ago as a single mother with a young child. She had moved down to Greater Victoria from Central Vancouver Island and was struggling to find an adequate and affordable home for herself and her daughter. She found an affordable market rental unit at Pacifica Housing and Diane has called it home ever since. Diane’s daughter has since grown up and moved out; however, Diane remembers what

it was like to raise her in the complex, along with the relief of finding housing that felt family friendly, spacious and comfortable.

The announcement of the energy retrofit project came as a surprise to Diane - she didn’t think the older complex would be prioritized, but the upgrades were very welcomed. “I think it is a win-win all around, a very positive move for everyone,” Diane shared, although she did acknowledge, “a few people were concerned about accommodating the workers on site,

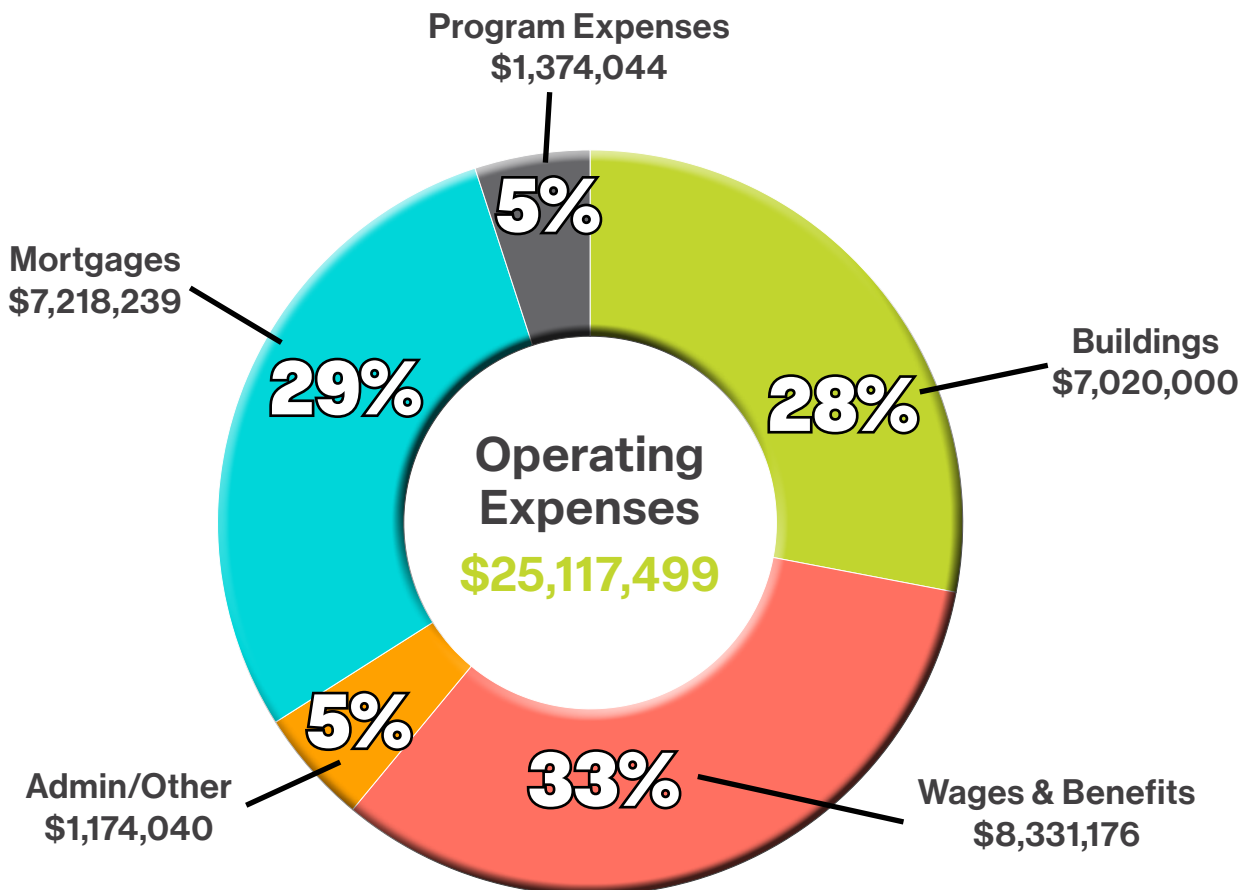
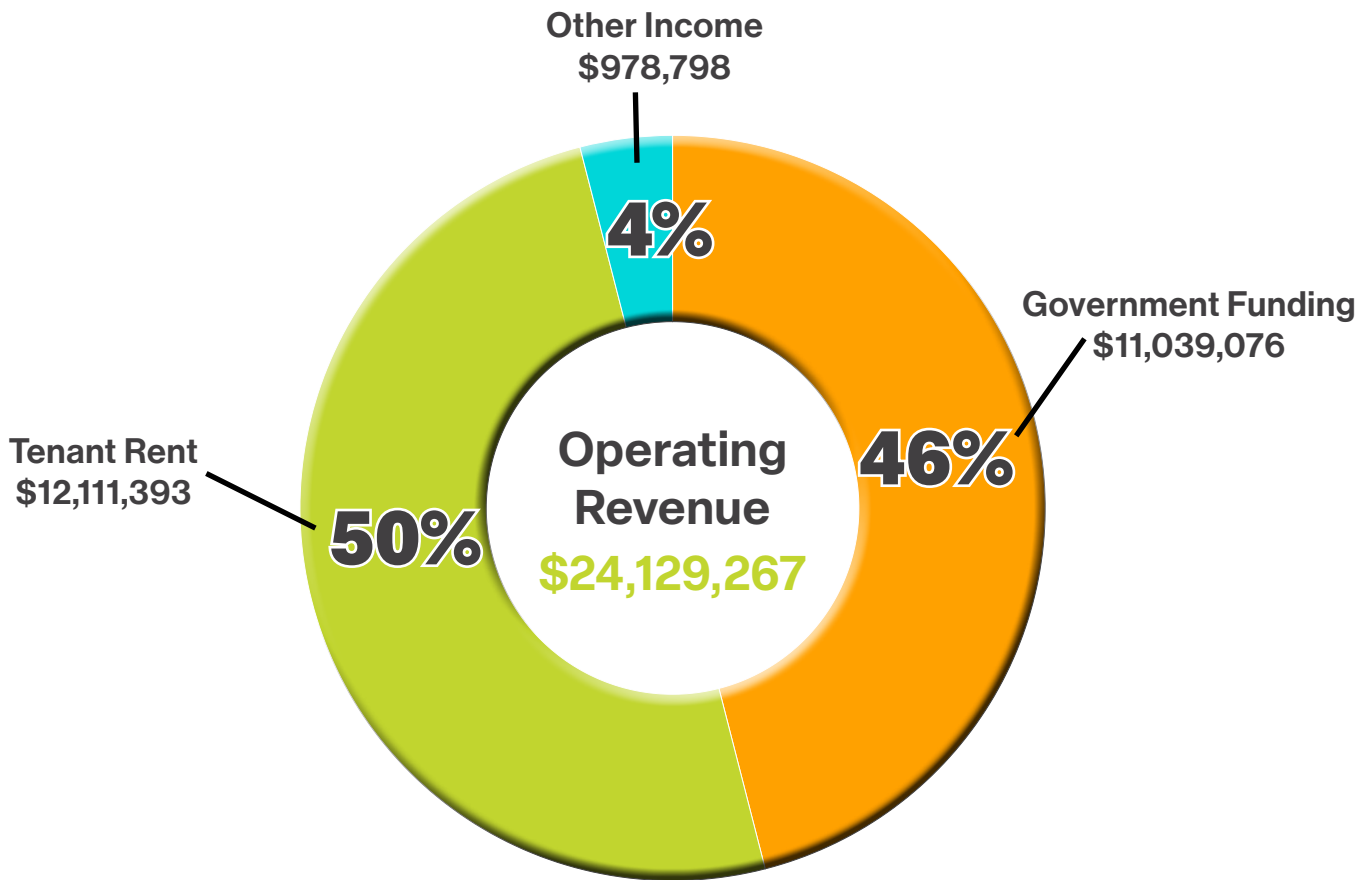
but we have been very pleasantly surprised by how lovely they have been.”

“I’m grateful to have somewhere to come home to. Having the AC is just another positive improvement to making this a comfortable home. I really look forward to having that come summertime – and to know it won’t have negative impacts on the environment.”

– Diane, Tamarack Close Resident

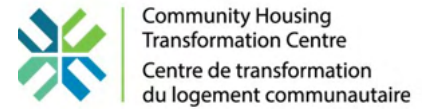
A hurdle for many residents was clearing the space for the unit upgrades. Diane remarked how many of her neighbours have lived in the complex a long time, and that clearing out years of accumulation to accommodate such a big project was initially daunting. But, the spirit of community has shown through at Tamarack Close, as neighbours banded together to help make the “construction zone” as easy on each other as possible, encouraging each other to pair down their belongings and help each other move heavy items. Pacifica Housing also stepped in to assist residents in clearing space to prepare for the upgrades.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW *



*Fiscal Year 2023: July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023

PARTNERS & FUNDERS



PACIFICA HOUSING

827 FISGARD STREET
VICTORIA, BC V8W 1R9
P: (250) 385-2131
F: (250) 385-6776



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