



Anawim House  
Empowered People Embracing Life

WINTER 2022

Hello All,

In 2022, the pandemic continued to challenge us to find new ways to adapt and serve our community. When we re-opened, all the guests accessing our drop-in program were brand new to us. They had no idea what Anawim was about. It took time, but we have gotten to know this new crowd. We are beginning to develop the ongoing personal relationships that allow us to understand their needs and give them some hope and guidance. Our approach has always been about these high-quality relationships, rather than just the number of people served.

Anawim has always been unique in this way. We have never believed in filling the house just to point to the numbers. Instead, we focus on a more meaningful definition of success: the drop-in that came in at the start of the day angry at the world, who by the end of the day is feeling thankful and looking forward to coming back tomorrow; the resident that feels confident enough to go back to school to get a job that is meaningful to them; the desperate drug addict that moves into Anawim and leaves a year or two later as a functional person in society. Every person’s “success” will be different, but each success is just as important as the next.

Counting the number of meals served can give you a sense of the volume of need in the community. What it can’t show you is the way that the atmosphere at Anawim helps those sitting around the table get a better perspective on their day so they can leave with a smile.

Before we opened our doors in 1991, we sat down with people on the street and asked them what they needed. They told us: “give us a place we can call our own, a place that can be our home. Stop doing everything ‘for’ us and stand alongside us.” 31 years later, it is still the formula that works to give people a chance to change, grow, and find a healthier way of life. It is not just about meeting basic needs. It is about giving people hope and a way out of where they are stuck. We want our people to thrive in their lives, not just survive another day.

We do this by being companions with our residents and guests, helping them find a healthy path they can develop for themselves. Most importantly, we do this with a family model – everyone working together to help each other get our lives back.

Anawim is growing and changing too, with our new women’s house being built, but our core philosophy remains the same: empowering people to embrace their lives and create the future they deserve. Just like the “big blue house on the corner”, the new women’s house will be a safe family environment where residents are given the support that they need to build the lives they want.



**Young man who donated his birthday money for the Women’s House!**

*~Terry Edison-Brown, Director*

## Message from the President

To all our Anawim friends and family,

2022 has been quite the year to say the least. Transitioning in a post COVID environment is proving to be quite the challenge for all of us. We are directly seeing the deepening effects of the affordability crisis in the people we serve every day. The reality is the needs of the most vulnerable in our society have never been greater and more pronounced than they are now. Our staff have been relentless in trying to keep helping those dealing with today's added complexities.

We are also very close to the twinning of our residential program for women. We anticipate opening our women's residential program in the Spring of 2023. It's been a long journey of many ups and downs but thanks to the many, many generous donations, large and small, we are so very excited to start helping both men AND women.

I get asked all the time about what makes Anawim unique. Above providing for one's basic needs, the key differentiator is our desire to create that loving community, one where our visitors and residents feel that they belong to something bigger than themselves. We feel that if people are provided with connection, that sense of belonging, coupled with the right supports, good things can and DO happen, regularly. Our mission is to be that beacon of light when people are ready to make that lasting change. That is what Anawim is all about. And that is what the Anawim's Women's House will be about as well.

Anawim is a unique community asset, having helped Victoria's most vulnerable for over 30 years. Given we rely 100% on private donations, without our community's support, we simply would not be able to carry on like we have. I know times may be tough but if you can find it in your heart to consider supporting us with your talent, time or treasure, your help would go a long way in keeping this community asset helping those that want to help themselves for years to come.

Merry Christmas and Happy 2023 to all!

Sincerely,

*Dan Greco*

Dan Greco  
President of Anawim



# House Coordinators

As of October 1st, 2022, Anawim is a full house with all 7 rooms filled.

At Anawim we say “Anawim helps those who want to be helped.” Selecting candidates for potential residency at Anawim is a well-designed process of interviews and planning and trying to assess each individual’s state of “**can**”, “**want**” and “**will**”.

While these three words might sound interchangeable, they can have very different meanings in terms of intent or commitment.

“**Can**” is a statement of capability, of having the knowledge or ability needed to do something. It comes from the cognitive part of the mind and reflects intellect.

“**Want**” is a statement of desire. It comes from the affective part of the mind, which deals with emotions and is the part of us that determines our preferences, likes and dislikes.

“**Will**” is a statement of commitment and action. This comes from the conative part of the mind, which is how you strive and act on your thoughts and feelings.

Residents join the house from different experiences, places, and pasts with one bonding thing in common – the **WANT** and the **WILL** for change.

As coordinators we work together to support residents and help them develop their own personal **CAN**.

And sometimes – they do.

*Following you will find some of their stories...*



# Resident Stories

“ I am writing this on my third day as a resident of Anawim House.

This is a special place that I am calling home. A house is just a house and yet when you add a family of residents, staff and guests you get a home worth being proud of.

When I relapsed one month ago, I found myself without shelter and without hope. The kind staff at Our Work Place told me about Anawim House. As I opened the web page, I was immediately impressed that it is a safe, supportive, clean (sober) house for both residents and guests. The guest program of safety, nutrition and personal care was inspiring. As I was in a program at Our Work Place to redirect my career into the field of outreach services, Anawim House felt like a perfect fit.

After a phone call I was invited to come to the house for an information meeting. Needless to say, I filled out the application right away. I met with each staff member on subsequent visits to the house acquainting myself with the available residents after the meetings.

I came on days when the house was open and took the opportunity to chat with some of the guests about random topics, the services that they were able to access in the house were always spoken about with kind words.



I had a tough month with my program requirements and dealing with a helpful but restrictive Island Health location where I was able to shelter. At the time I was desperate for shelter, but I was keener on finding a place to call home where my recovery would be supported.

Throughout the application process I learned that I would be given the opportunity to do the work needed to get out of survival mode and to get into recovery mode.

The process of becoming a resident has been an empowering time of personal growth and self-reflection along with reconnection with my recovery program. I am fortunate to say that on my second day as resident I was given the support to get acquainted with a new specialised counsellor.

I can't imagine a better place to call home and to find a family that accepts me unconditionally. ”

Randy – New Resident – Move In Date : September 25th, 2022

“Anawim caught me when I was falling. I believe that I am alive because I found Anawim house.

I can remember as a child, being given my first beer at 8 and my first whiskey at 10. I grew up, in part, in the Appalachians where drinking was a way of life. Many years later I was abusing alcohol and cocaine.

In late 2015 my marriage began to fall apart, and I began to drink myself to death. By July of 2021-I had lost my home, my community associations, was divorced and broke, the two children that I loved desperately and who had always been with me were with their mother. I wasn't bathing regularly and was living in a tent in a garden. I stayed awake for days at a time drinking myself into a stupor. I was blacking out and am still missing large pieces of that time as well as large pieces of my childhood.

I stumbled across and then into Anawim. It was like finding a miracle. I started coming to Anawim as a drop in and began to talk about my life in shambles with the folks there. I remember at the time I had lost control of

my emotions and would often cry. After two weeks of support from Anawim, and being part of their community, I had a moment in my garden. I remember it as clearly as the memory of wanting to shoot my mother.

I made a life altering decision. I had two young children that I loved, and I had to try to restore the love. I had met people who were trying to help me and asked me to consider moving into the house and I decided that I would try. Now I am in therapy at the Men's Therapy Centre, studying CBT with a physician led group, participating in the SMART program and attending Work BC seminars. And addressing my alcohol abuse. This is only a result of the support and direction that I have received from Anawim house. I am parenting again, fully present, as a result of the support that I have received from Anawim house. As well I am working with Sara on a self-authoring course which forces me to write the story of who I was, who I am and helps me define who I will be.

I owe the fact that I am still alive to Anawim, to Terry and Sara, to Stacey and Anna, to Jim, to the Board of Directors, to the community that I have found here, and to the rest of wonderful people who work here.

Having the opportunity to give back, to be there for other residents, to cook wholesome food for the folks who need it, to help with the Out of the Rain dinners and to help the house where I can has been profound and satisfying.”

*George – Current Resident – Move In date August 2021*



“I heard of Anawim House through island health while at detox. I was applying for recovery houses. The Staff at Anawim actually came in and interviewed me which I thought showed a level of care and interest in their clients that led me to believe it was the right place for me to go.

Anawim supported me with my recovery by providing a safe and caring environment. They also set me up with and paid for my counseling. Anawim allowed me to go to school while living there, making special exceptions for me to do so. Anawim supported me as I discovered what worked for me and my recovery only ever offering suggestions and not mandates. There was always someone to talk to when needed, staff or client.

I loved playing Bear Mt with Jim, and nerding over Star Wars with Terry and having weird back and forths with Stacey. Always having a good chat with the ladies who would come in and volunteer.

Currently I am working full time. I play golf, tennis, volleyball and workout in my free time. I attend and facilitate SMART meetings. And I'm working towards my red seal for carpentry. Life is good.”

*Myles – Long-time resident Moved out August 2022*



# Drop-in Program & Volunteers

“ I started as a volunteer greeter at Anawim House in the spring of 2019. At the time, I had been retired from the BC Public Service for several years and I was looking for an opportunity to make a contribution to my community by volunteering with a non-profit organization that was making a real difference in the lives of community members who need help. At Anawim House, I found what I was looking for.

My weekly shifts at Anawim House are generally busy, sometimes challenging, and always rewarding. I’ve had an opportunity to work with and learn from wonderful staff members who are endlessly patient, supportive, and caring. Working at Anawim House has given me something else important as well—a chance to meet and connect with some of the most vulnerable members of our community and gain a better understanding of their needs and challenges.

As a greeter, I am often the first person someone meets when they walk through the door of Anawim House. It’s my job to make them feel welcome and to help them get what they need, whether that’s a shower; laundry facilities; a meal; someone to talk to; or just a calm, comfortable place to sit, have a coffee and recharge. My favourite part of the job is when I see someone come in who is stressed and wary, and then watch them relax and smile knowing they have come to a place where they will be safe and treated with respect. During my time at Anawim, I’ve gotten to know many of the regular drop-in guests by name and I really enjoy chatting with



**Robin Burgess**  
Volunteer Greeter, Anawim House

them, even briefly, and finding out what’s going on in their lives.

Like everyone who meets Anawim House, I know just what an important and unique service Anawim House provides to men and women in need in Greater Victoria. I feel privileged to be part of the Anawim House family. ”

– Robin



**Volunteers in the Clothing Room**

*“Whatever you can do or believe that you can do begin it. Action has magic, grace and power in it.”*

*~ Goethe*

“I became a volunteer at Anawim in the fall of 2019. I was new in Victoria and learned about Anawim at a volunteer fair at the University. Soon after I started volunteering at Anawim, I was paired with Becky, another volunteer, and we became the regular Thursday morning “meet and greet” team.

Working as a volunteer at Anawim is a very special experience. I feel useful and appreciated, very much part of a cohesive team of staff, volunteers, and residents.

Anawim feels very much like home. It looks like home; a nice house and yard in a pleasant part of town, it is a calm and gentle place, where our guests can rest, eat, do laundry, and have showers, feeling welcome and safe.

The staff at Anawim are incredibly patient and supportive. They trust us to do our jobs as volunteers and encourage us to use our initiative but are always available to help and guide us.

Anawim has become a very important part of my life, where I have made great friends and where I feel at home and very much part of a family.”



**Becky, Ken and Lead Coordinator Stacey Gillespie**

“I began volunteering at Anawim at the end of 2017 and have been volunteering weekly for the better part of the years since, greeting guests as they arrive and directing them toward the various services that Anawim offers. For much of that time I have been working alongside Ken, another volunteer who has become a good friend to me as well.

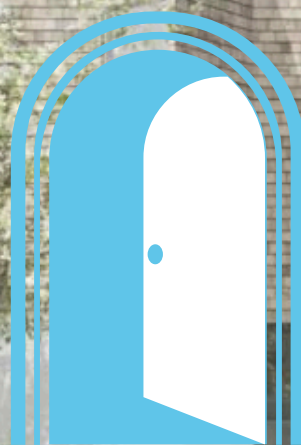
Volunteering at Anawim is always a bright spot in my week. I love seeing familiar faces each Thursday and welcoming new ones alongside them. I love the feeling of “warmth” that Anawim holds, and I try to build on that feeling with my volunteer time.

I am always impressed by the supportive attitudes I see at Anawim – between the residents, volunteers, staff and guests. I am proud to be part of the Anawim community.”

– Ken

– Becky

*“to give, is not about you”*



# Anawim

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## Women's House

In 1991, The Anawim Companion Society opened the doors of Anawim House at 973 Caledonia Ave.

Known as the “big blue house “on the corner, Anawim House operates as a full support drop-in service for those experiencing poverty and homelessness. Hot meals, showers, laundry and companionship are offered daily in a family model of table dinners and “together we can”.

Anawim continues to offer a full co-ed drop-in service as well as a male residents' program, which connects residents with counselling services, education and employment counselling and many other support services. Residents are also expected to be involved in all aspects of the house, including cooking for and providing meal services for our drop-in program. This model of service and family, healthy living and compassion is one we are very proud of and have seen the benefits firsthand. For many years it has been the hope of the Anawim Companion's Society to be able to offer the same service to women in need.

A new Anawim Women's house will help meet the critical need for housing and support for women living on the street. Like our men's house, the Anawim Women's house will offer a family model of recovery in a substance free environment. The need

for such a house – a place where women can live in safety while they recover their lives, reconnect with loved ones, including children, and build a hopeful future - has never been greater than it is today.

In 2019, an anonymous female donor – donated her home – for the purpose of Anawim Women's House.

***Jim Ross - Vice Chair of the Board of Directors had the pleasure of meeting with her and discussing her invaluable donation.***

“Let's refer to our anonymous donor as Grace because she is so full of Grace. Grace is not her name. 10 years ago, Grace thought that her house might be too much for her to look after and at the same time fell in love with an affordable condominium that she felt was where she should live.

At the same time there was a person at her church looking for an affordable house to rent.

Did all this happen by coincidence, no, Grace feels that it was a Holy Spirit Moment. She told me that God prompted her, he spoke quietly and only once.

Later, she came across the Anawim newsletter included in the church bulletin. She read the presidents' message about our Women's House



project. Grace read the words “we are looking for a suitable location” and another Holy Spirit moment happened. Instantly, quietly and only once she heard God telling her to do it, donate her house. The location is more than suitable, it’s perfect. It’s less than a block to a shopping mall, it’s one block to a bus stop, and schools and colleges are within blocks.

We asked what Grace knew about Anawim and why she felt it was the organization she wanted to support. She did not know the founder or any board members but liked what she heard when we gave talks at the church. She admired the philosophy of Anawim, and that we do not pamper the residents or drop ins. She feels it is very important that we ask people to help prepare meals, help clean up and do as many chores as possible. Grace then explained “the dignity of work”. She believes strongly that work is an obligation, it gives dignity as human beings and is not a commodity. She also recognized that those who have made donations to Anawim are salt of the earth people. “Grass roots from the ground up” people are attracted to Anawim House and the work we do.

And I asked Grace why she wants to remain anonymous. She replied, “to give, is not about you”.

And so, with this message, Grace’s considerable donation, and the amazing support from our community and our giving donors - The Anawim Companion Society went to work!



## *With the help of the Carole & Clint Forster Foundation, a fund held at the Victoria Foundation - we broke ground on May 18, 2022*

“Thanks to the generous contributions of our donors and the great support from Mayor (Lisa) Helps, city council, and the City of Victoria staff, we have officially begun construction on this long-needed facility, one where we can help those who want to be helped, one person at a time,” Dan Greco, President of the Board.



It takes a village, and one kind act begets another. We have been so privileged and honored by all the support we have been given. The women’s house and the services it will provide is only made possible by all those who have contributed as Anawim receives no direct funding from the government and all our donations go directly to fund our support services.

Aryze Developments is our General Contractor and have reduced their General Contractor Fee by 75% and are taking no mark up on any of the materials or services involved in the construction. The project manager and site superintendent are constantly asking their suppliers for help reducing costs plus put in extra effort to save time and money to get things accomplished efficiently.

# **TOGETHER WE CAN - AGAIN.**

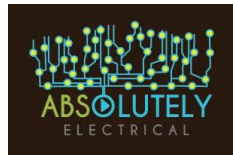


“As homebuilders, we believe housing is a human right. We are honoured to have supported Anawim in the development—and now construction—of a safe and secure women’s housing facility for those who need it most. The men’s facility has helped hundreds of residents since opening its doors and we are honoured to be playing a small role for women in our community who are seeking this type of individual support.”

– Melanie Ransome, Director of Communications & Engagement, Aryze Developments

Thank you so much for helping us build a safe place  
for vulnerable women in Victoria.

**SHOUT OUTS! - Please support OUR supporters!**





“ I found Anawim House while I was homeless and struggling with addiction. A friend of mine told me about the services they provide. Getting accepted as a resident was one of the best things to happen to me in a long time. They provided me with more than I expected and asked for very little in return. I am so grateful for that. Living there gave me time process the direction of my life up until now and plan where I would like it to go. To me the staff and residents I lived with are like family and I hope to sustain a connection with them for a long time. I moved out in May of 2022 and I couldn't have made it this far without them.”

*Russell – Long-time resident moved into market housing May 2022*



# Guests

In 1991, volunteers at a local soup kitchen in Victoria – recognized that homelessness is so much more than poverty. As they got to know the community in which they served – they asked what would help?



**Drop ins working in kitchen**

And the resounding replies were – a home. Suitably named by one of these very people, Anawim – “Gods precious poor “ House opened its doors to the public.

Entirely volunteer based and run – Anawim became a safe refuge in a family environment where people on the street could come for family meals, a warm comfortable living area to sit and make the connections so often needed.

Thirty years later we continue to host and serve all new and regular folks who “drop in” to the house and participate with staff, volunteers, and residents in providing a warm and kind environment for all who need it.

We are grateful for all the people that contribute to making Anawim House such a unique and special place. *We asked a few of our guests to share their experiences with us.*



**Terry & Chen**

“As a low-income person in recovery finding Anawim House was a godsend. Having a safe, warm, healthy and welcoming environment I know I can go for a meal, a shower, help with ID or a kind word of support when needed makes a huge difference in my day to day life.

I wish every neighborhood would have a healing place like this.

Thank you for all you do.”

*Carlos K – Been dropping in for over a year*



**Carlos**

“There are no ways or words to describe my deep appreciation for the non-profit organization Anawim House, but I will try to anyways.

As a woman, living on the street and in my van, has involved me in a dangerous lifestyle that I had no choice in. The shelters that have resources are, unbelievably, all harm reduction shelters meaning there is a plethora of drug/alcohol use both outside and inside. People, actively using drugs and currently high on drugs/alcohol, are often unpredictable and willing to do whatever is required to acquire their next high. I've been hollered at and yelled at, followed around and denied personal space. I've experienced sexual harassment and threats. I've been assaulted and robbed. These are all common daily incidents that occur at these establishments.

But here at Anawim was so much different. I felt an unprecedented security knowing I would not be accosted by dangerous people while entering the facilities. I also was able to access the facilities inside without fear.

The day I found Anawim House while searching for resources for homelessness was a blessing and a day I will always remember.



I was feeling so helpless at my ability to find a place that didn't judge me for wanting a safe environment for myself.

Every time I walk in to Anawim I am warmly welcomed at the door by name. I am not just a client to them, here we are all considered family.

Breakfast and lunch are made in turns by the men in the residential program. Chores are signed up for by the clients. Everyone works together and eats together. The focus is on getting to know one another and community building. There is no other place like this... but there should be! ”

*Jaed – drop in guest*



# How Can You Help?

Visit [www.anawimhouse.com](http://www.anawimhouse.com)

**Make out a cheque** to Anawim Companions Society and mail using the form.

Reach out **(250) 382-0283**

Email us [info@anawimhouse.com](mailto:info@anawimhouse.com)



**We have so many exciting changes coming soon to our growing family - and would love to keep in touch!**

**Please make sure you fill in your email address on return form or email us at [info@anawimhouse.com](mailto:info@anawimhouse.com)**

**This positive change will ensure everyone is informed in the quickest possible way and help improve our carbon footprint!**

**Thank-you for your continued support!**



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## Leaving a Legacy

How we will be remembered after we're gone is worth thinking about. How can we continue to support the homeless and the working poor of Victoria when our lives are over?

This is an important question that takes into consideration our broader family: our fellow citizens and the community in which we live. A "legacy gift" to Anawim ensures that its future is securely funded for the hundreds of people who rely on our help.

Whether a bequest in a will, stocks or mutual funds, life insurance or RRSPs, a legacy gift is a way for your charitable work to continue after your lifetime. Please call us if you would like to discuss planned giving.

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ANAWIM COMPANIONS SOCIETY  
973 CALEDONIA AVENUE  
VICTORIA, BC V8T 1E7



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