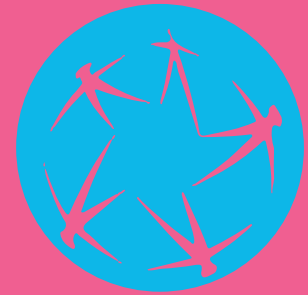


ANNUAL REPORT

2020



VANCOUVER
FRIENDS
FOR
LIFE





Vancouver Friends for Life

is proud to share our 2020 story of resilience.

Despite our shared challenges this past year we continue to provide an Open Door to Wellness for our clients and community. We are so grateful to our members, staff, and community partners for your ongoing commitment to this work.

Our Mission

Vancouver Friends for Life is a caring, innovative centre and community-based service that provides individual and group specialized wellness supports for people living with cancer, HIV, HCV or other life-interrupting diagnoses. We demonstrate leadership in improving the quality of life for people facing significant illness through collaboration, innovation, and wellness programming.

Message from the Board and Executive Director

This is the time when we take a moment to evaluate our success over the past year and identify areas where we can improve. First, it has been a tremendous pleasure to work at the Vancouver Friends for Life Society (VFFL), located in the beautiful Diamond Centre for Living, with the best team of dedicated staff and volunteers. Thank you for showing up week after week to welcome members of our community facing HIV, hepatitis C, cancer and other life-interrupting illnesses.

This past year has indeed been a challenge, but one that we continue to face with resolve and renewed hope. The COVID-19 pandemic forced many of us to make some tough decisions. The Diamond Centre for Living was, unfortunately, not spared. However, despite these difficult times, we worked hard to find ways to deliver much-needed services to our members. Together, we successfully transitioned some of our programs to meet the needs of our members in the current pandemic context. Counselling sessions, for example, quickly transitioned to telephone or online platforms, while other services such as the Buddy Program were launched to reach out to our members in need.

You will see, as you review this annual report, that in this last year we have accomplished a number of key initiatives proposed by the Board or initiated because of input from our members. Concurrently, we have spent a great deal of time working on the future of the Diamond Centre for Living, to ensure that it will be there to serve our members well into the long-term.

In some ways, the upcoming year is a new beginning for us as an organization. Despite tough economic times, we managed to survive 2020 and find new ways to triumph over adversity in order to keep supporting our members. With the closure of Positive Living and Positive Women's Network, membership at VFFL continues to increase.

As you read this annual report, we hope it will remind you of our commitment to the success of our organization and energize you as we envision the future of VFFL. For those of you who have tirelessly committed time and energy to this organization, a heart-felt thank you. For the many of you who are new, a warm welcome to VFFL.

With much gratitude,

Robert Ablenas
President, Board of Directors

Jesse Brown
Executive Director



Wellness Program

VFFL has been delivering Wellness Program for People Living with a Life-Interrupting Illness since our doors first opened. For many, the “House” offers unique opportunities for people to connect with others, developing their social networks. We provide members with a safe place where they can connect with peers as well as caring and trained volunteers.

The Wellness Program allows our members to create a plan of health supports to meet their own needs, utilizing different therapies and treatments that they might not have access to otherwise. This leads to health stability, improved quality of life, improved health outcomes, and the ability to remain at home. It also helps manage the side-effects of medications and treatments. In turn, this reduces the need for acute care, hospitalization, and institutionalization.



Wellness Program by the Numbers

Despite program limitations due to COVID-19 restrictions we served 168 client-members and provided over 642 home cooked meals, 1200 hours of hosted drop-in time, 248 hours of counselling, therapy, and workshops, 370 hours of body work (includes massage therapy, reflexology, Reiki, and yoga) and 332 hours of Naturopathic and Chiropractic clinic time.

Our Wellness Program is made possible by the generous volunteer contribution of our practitioners, physicians, therapists, cooks and hosts – thank you for going above and beyond in 2020.

WOMEN'S WELLNESS




The **Women's Wellness and Leadership Project** is an initiative of the Vancouver Friends for Life Society that supports women across British Columbia with lived experience of HIV and hepatitis C on their personal path to health and wellness. To date, the project has offered grants of up to \$2,500 to over 60 recipients.

All grant applicants from across British Columbia were invited to attend the Women's Wellness and Leadership conference on March 10, 2020, at the Civic Hotel in Surrey, B.C. on the unceded traditional territory of the Semiahmoo, Katzie Kwikwetlem, Kwantlen, Qayqayt and Tsawwassen First Nations. The conference was designed to bring together all the women who participated in the grant process to share and celebrate their personal experiences. The day's activities included a keynote speaker, uplifting presentations, personal testimonials and activities that promoted community and sharing in a meaningful way. We are grateful to all the Vancouver Friends for Life Society staff, volunteers, and generous partners at Pacific AIDS Network and PHSA, who ensured this conference was a big success.

Hear what our participants had to say by visiting our **YouTube** channel [Vancouver Friends for Life](#).



Friends for life **GARDEN** PARTY



Many non-profit organizations have undergone adjustments to better serve their communities, Vancouver Friends for Life Society included. As the proverbial phrase goes, when life gives you lemons, make lemonade. Well, we did!

The Vancouver Friends for Life Society held a Summer Garden Party fundraiser on July 12, 2020. Members from our West End community, donors and those who use our services, were invited to join in an outdoor celebration where we all enjoyed good music, mingling, and backyard bingo, hosted by Vancouver drag icon Carlotta Gurl. The Garden Party was a success and raised over \$5,000 towards our program. We are so grateful to all of our generous sponsors, wonderful volunteers, and all who attended and donated for their commitment to this precious house.



BINGO FOR LIFE



Wednesday evening we host a night of entertainment and fundraiser for the society hosted by Vancouver Drag Icon, Carlotta Gurl. We look forward to the return of Bingo at our new venue **Eleven Eighty One** on Davie Street.

Check out our active social media channels for all the updates



@vancouverffl



@VanFFL



/VanFFL

Our most sincere appreciation to the owners and staff at Mary's on Davie, and to all local West End businesses that donate prizes each week! We encourage our members to shop local and support these generous small businesses.

▶▶▶▶▶ **Thank you** to our 2020 funders! ◀◀◀◀◀

Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation – City of Vancouver

Community Gaming Grant – Province of BC

Provincial Health Services Authority

Grayross Foundation – Vancouver Foundation

Bradley Joseph Fund – Vancouver Foundation

Dr. Peter AIDS Foundation – Art For Life

The Diamond Foundation

Equitable Bank, Este Lauder Cosmetics, Netflix, RBC, Tacofino, Mary's on Davie, Fountainhead Pub, Eleven Eighty One, Summerhill Pyramid Winery, Twin Sails Brewing, Kimprints, Nandos Davie Street, Little Sister's Bookstore, Obsessions Retail Inc., Peaked Pies on Denman, Stephos, La Belle Patate, Davie Street, Your Independent Grocer, Melriches Coffeehouse, TopDrawers, The Burly Barber, Murrick Insurance.

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to each individual who gave a financial gift in 2020. Thank you for your commitment to Vancouver Friends for Life and the wellness of our community!

Vancouver Friends for Life

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We acknowledge that George Weeks House, now the Diamond Centre for Living, is on the unceded, occupied, ancestral and traditional homelands of the xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

