



**PHOENIX  
SOCIETY**

**2019 - 2020  
YEAR IN REVIEW**





# PHOENIX SOCIETY

Phoenix Drug & Alcohol  
Recovery and Education Society

— Established in 1989 —

13686 94A Avenue  
Surrey, BC V3V 1N1

[www.phoenixsociety.com](http://www.phoenixsociety.com)



@Phoenix\_Society



@PhoenixSocietySurrey



@phoenixsociety.surrey



/phoenixsociety.surrey

## VISION:

A healthy community where all people feel connected and have opportunities to discover and build on their strengths to reach their full potential.

## MISSION:

The Phoenix Society is a multi-service agency dedicated to providing accessible services and opportunities to people who face barriers related to addiction, mental health, housing, education, criminal justice involvement and/or employment.

## VALUES:

- Relationships - built on safety, trust, and integrity
- Social Innovation - for individual and community well-being
- Social Justice - equal access to health, well-being, justice, wealth and opportunity
- Strengths-based - discover and build on the inherent strengths of individuals

## EXECUTIVE TEAM



Keir Macdonald  
Chief Executive Officer



Kim Brazil  
Chief Financial Officer



Daniel Marks  
Director of Programs  
Mental Health  
and Addictions



Nate McCready  
Director of Programs  
Fraser South



Kari Hackett  
Director of Programs  
Fraser East

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Pat Frewer  
President



Jag Gill  
Vice President



Darren Fairbrother  
Treasurer



David Longpre  
Director



Elaine Duvall  
Director



Miranda Compton  
Director





Phoenix Society staff and residents participate in the annual Toque Tuesday ball hockey tournament at Surrey Civic Plaza which raises awareness to the problem of homelessness in the city. The tournament is held annually on the first Tuesday in February.

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# LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



PAT  
FREWER



This has been a year of many changes, some unexpected, but all reinforcing the strength of our organization.

As the year started, we were still somewhat in transition from the retirements of our founders Michael and Ann Wilson, but clearly finding our new feet under the leadership of Keir Macdonald and our staff and management teams.

Keir was firmly settled in as our first CEO. Our strategic planning had called for a focus on staff development and the team was continuing to build. Some new positions were created, and some roles redefined to better suit our needs and our staff's expertise.

Another focus was on new development work, for housing, programs, and funding sources. We were inspired to strengthen our governance protocols, and our Board. By mid-year, we were considering expanding the distribution, leadership, and scope of our services into neighbouring municipalities who were looking for our expertise.

Our "merger" with the Positive Living Fraser Valley Society was carefully studied and has now been completed and what we have accomplished in Surrey is becoming more widely known, and admired by neighbouring municipalities.

This has been a year for considering development sites, and not only in Surrey. We decided not to proceed with one major development proposal. While disappointing, after significant effort had been expended on sourcing the opportunity, it was also good to see that we know how to say "no" and move on, when that is appropriate.

In another smaller scale case, the due diligence efforts were rewarded with a positive outcome and we purchased a site in a quiet neighbourhood, with an existing house. Phoenix House is now open, licensed for residential care services, and operating under funding and operating agreements.

As Phoenix House was nearing readiness to open, the global COVID-19 pandemic changed from a far-off news story to something that would disrupt our daily lives and literally all of the Society's operations. Tremendous resilience and courageous, hard work has kept all of our programs operating and so far our sites are COVID-free. Our management and staff have shown deep dedication, supported all the way by patience and caring of our clients. Our funding and operating partners have all been part of a system-wide demonstration of our community's ability to deal with a massive crisis.

Even in the face of a pandemic, our programs continue and our personnel and program development continues. Clearly, Phoenix is unstoppable.

Looking ahead, we'll be increasing our integration, to better serve the whole person – and not just at a point in time, but over time, for lasting change and sustainable personal and community development. We'll also be increasing our reach – sending our expertise out to a broader geographical community where our services are desperately needed. Expansion will only occur, though, when consistent with our mission, and complementary to our core operations.

I'm grateful to my colleagues on our board, for their expertise and time. Thanks to Keir and our incredible staff for their unwavering commitment. And thanks to our clients, for their patience and support through some difficult times. They are also partners in what we do.

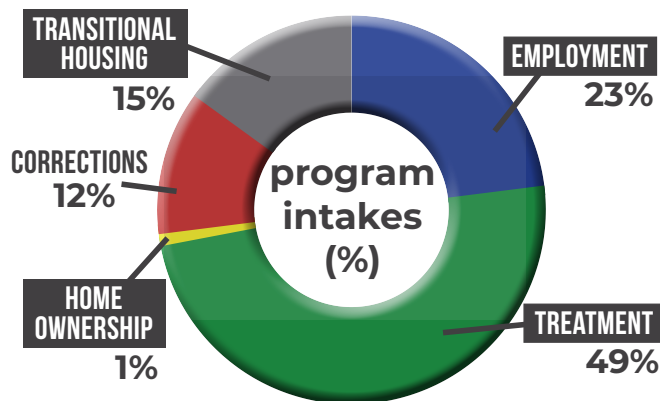
Respectfully submitted,



1,966

people were provided services through our Residential Addiction Treatment, Transitional Housing, Employment, EWR, Corrections, Home Ownership and Outreach programs.

INTAKES



1,331\*

individual  
counselling  
sessions  
delivered

\*residential addiction treatment and transitional housing residents



57,050

nights  
people  
were  
housed

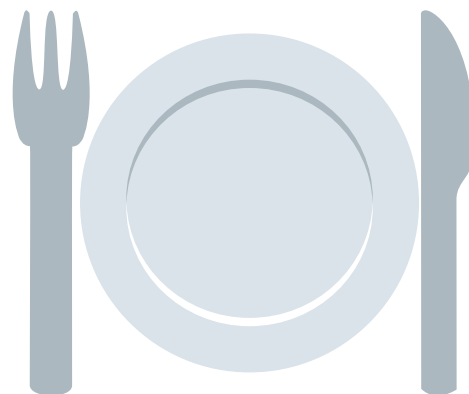
OVER 3,000



hours of  
resident  
volunteer  
work  
in the  
community

82,680

healthy meals served  
across all programs





# LETTER FROM THE PHOENIX CEO



KEIR  
MACDONALD



This year was a period of celebration and growth for Phoenix and a time for putting in place a number of building blocks that we hope will serve the organization for many years to come.

The year started with our strategic planning session in April, which saw our board, executive team and staff from across the organization come together for a full day planning session. This was a time to dream, to put any challenges on the table and to come up with a vision for what the future of Phoenix could look like. We took the opportunity to review our vision, mission, and values and in September we formally launched our five-year strategic plan which identified the following priorities: ***Managed growth, Diversifying our Revenue, Strengthening our Voice, Innovative Service Delivery, and Organizational Excellence.***

In June we saw the number of our contracted residential substance use treatment beds grow by eight. The additional funding for these beds allowed for some significant new investments into our clinical programs at Phoenix, including the provisions of 24/7 nursing staff and new counsellors. We also completed a review of our programming offered across all three tiers of treatment programs and made some important changes, including the relocation of our Stabilization program which we believed needed a more independent setting. This program provides a safe structured environment for people who have recently completed withdrawal management or who may have a bed booked with another agency and need a place to help them bridge that gap. In the fall we found a new home in Surrey for this 10-bed program that provides the perfect recovery setting.

September saw Phoenix celebrate another key milestone, our 30th anniversary. Founded in 1989, the Phoenix Society has achieved so much over the years and this was a time to reflect back, to come together and recognize some of the many milestones. It was at this time that one of the largest changes of our organization's history was also being contemplated – the merger with the Positive Living Fraser Valley Society, based out of Abbotsford. In the end, the decision to bring our organizations together became a simple one; we all saw that with this

collaboration our clients would now have the opportunity to enter one of the service locations in Abbotsford or Surrey, and be connected to an extensive continuum of services that would start them on their journey to recovery, or lessen the harms caused by substance use or an HIV/Hep C diagnosis. This also presented the first opportunity for Phoenix to grow our programs beyond Surrey and a step closer to a vision of providing services across the Fraser region.

It was another horrific year for the drug poisoning crisis in BC, with over 5,000 lives being lost since this public health emergency was first declared in 2016. What has become clear to us is that the conversation is not about investments and access to harm reduction services or treatment and recovery, but both. Both are incredibly important to providing a comprehensive system of care that provides opportunities to get well and lesson or abstain entirely from substance use when people are ready to do so. But first we must keep people alive and lessen the harms caused by substance use. We can no longer wait for the system to be created for us; we need these services now.

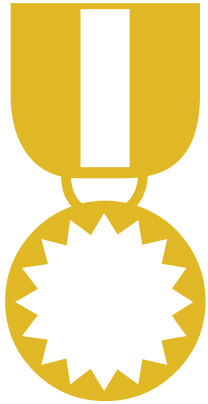
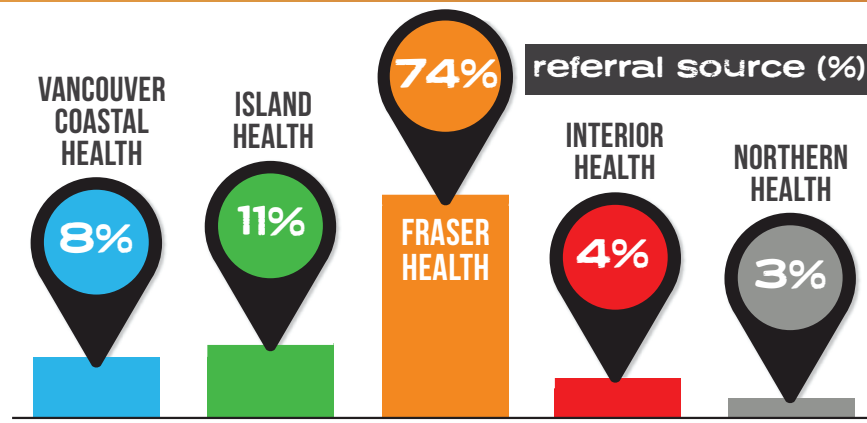
The year ended with another public health emergency, the COVID-19 pandemic, which threatened our clients who were already so vulnerable. Thankfully, largely due to our amazing staff who worked tirelessly to implement key changes to help prevent exposure and limit the risks of transfer, we did not have any positive cases in any of our Phoenix programs.

It has been an incredible year for Phoenix, with even more exciting opportunities ahead of us. Once again, I would like to thank Pat Frewer and the rest of the Phoenix Society board for really stepping up and carrying a heavier burden this year in supporting our many new initiatives. To our wonderful staff who are the most committed group of people I have ever had the privilege to work alongside, thank you for your dedication.

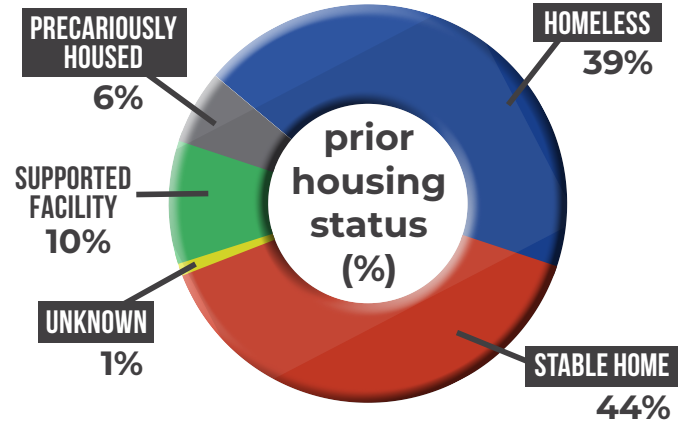
Yours Sincerely,



# RESIDENTIAL SUBSTANCE USE TREATMENT STATISTICS



**70%**  
treatment  
completion  
rate

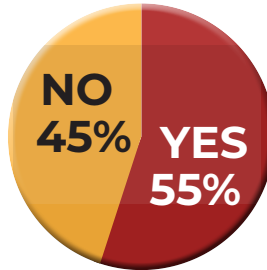


**26%**  
Female



**74%**  
Male

concurrent  
disorders



criminal justice system  
involvement



**44% | 56%**  
YES | NO

## ASTEP PROGRAM



**63%**

completed  
training  
and/or gained  
employment

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING



**64%**

moved to  
permanent  
housing





JEFF  
HARDY

Phoenix  
Alumni

CEO, FOUNDER  
Lifeguard  
Digital Health



## MEET JEFF: HUSBAND, FATHER, PHOENIX ALUMNI, CEO & FOUNDER OF LIFEGUARD DIGITAL HEALTH

If there is such a thing as hitting rock bottom, Jeff had hit it and hit it hard. He had lost his successful business, his family and if he wasn't careful he knew even his life was in jeopardy.

"It took me 40 minutes to get to the office and I'd stop at a liquor store three times on the way," recalls Jeff. "I'd lost the business, I knew I wasn't coming home, my kids weren't talking to me, I thought in that moment I would drink myself to death."

He entered treatment programs multiple times to shake his addiction, but nothing was working for him. He was even kicked out three times for drinking. However, it would be the Phoenix Society where Jeff's life would change for the better. "It was the structured environment of Phoenix that was perfect for me, it allowed you to feel secure, yet gave you some independence."

Addiction Counsellor Bill Dunne had a huge impact on Jeff's time at Phoenix but it was also his opportunity to continue his stay in the integrated transitional housing program for an additional 18 months that really gave him the time to heal and put his life back together. "In the end it took me 26 months to get to a place where I was okay to leave Phoenix... scared but okay," recounts Jeff.

Jeff recently returned to the Phoenix Centre in Surrey for the first time in more than two years and was met with mixed emotions; this was a place that helped get his life back, but one memory was almost too painful to recall. In 2017 while still at Phoenix, Jeff lost his young, vibrant friend, Evan, to an overdose. "It is so typical, what is happening out there, Evan was defenceless against fentanyl, he wasn't going to win this battle."

From that moment Jeff started thinking about ways your cell phone could help you. His loss inspired him to find a solution to the drug poisoning crisis that has now taken over 5,000 lives

since the public health emergency in British Columbia was first declared in 2016.

Today Jeff is reunited with his family and is Founder and CEO of Lifeguard, who in partnership with British Columbia Emergency Health Services has developed and recently launched a cell phone app which allows people who use drugs to help protect themselves from overdose by enabling direct access to emergency services.

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*"It was the structured environment of Phoenix that was perfect for me. It allowed you to feel secure, yet gave you some independence."*

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- Jeff

The app is activated by the user before they take their dose and after 50 seconds the app will sound an alarm. If the user doesn't hit a button to stop the alarm, indicating they are fine, the alarm grows louder. After 75 seconds a text-to-voice call will go straight to 9-1-1, alerting emergency medical dispatchers of a potential overdose.

Since it launched in May, Lifeguard has already had over 1,000 downloads, 3,000 uses, but most importantly has already saved several lives. None of this would have been possible without Jeff's successful recovery at Phoenix.

"Let them save your life, they know what they're doing. Great things are on the other side of that door, they are just waiting for you, go get it...."





NATASHA

Phoenix  
Alumni



## MEET NATASHA: PUTTING RECOVERY FIRST

By the time Natasha came to Phoenix the drugs had taken over. She wasn't eating, drinking or sleeping really. She wasn't working. Destroyed family relationships... barely had any friends left.

"The drugs were killing me and on some level deep down apparently I wasn't ready to die," recalls Natasha. "My drug of choice was crack cocaine. I later found out it was cut with Fentanyl."

"I'd been to recovery before.... For my kids, sent by the ministry... this time I wanted it....," continues Natasha. "I was doing it for myself. I also got rid of the boyfriend. Last time after I got out of a recovery house we ended up using within a month. I had to let him go... I put my recovery first. At Phoenix I learned... I still struggle with guilt and shame but not as much as I did when I got there. I have more respect for myself than I did before Phoenix."

Natasha arrived at Phoenix July 16, 2019. She went in to the Provincial Women's Treatment program for 90 days and then moved to our Transitional Housing program.

The Women's program is an evidence-based, tier 4 addiction treatment program that provides an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to supporting participants and their individualized treatment goals. This program supports women who are in need of residential treatment for serious substance use concerns, specifically drug and alcohol addiction issues, or have concurrent disorders. A referral for this program must be made with the client through a professional person in the community (counsellor, social worker, physician, psychiatrist, mental health and addiction team provider).

"I couldn't go back to my old life. 90 days was not enough for me. Transition housing allowed me to make a new sober life and live in a sober community while I rebuilt", remembers Natasha.

Transitional housing provides a safe, structured, affordable, post-treatment transition housing program and a supportive, empowering community for both men and women. Individuals can be offered a stay for up to two years. This unique housing

program sits within a hub of integrated employment and education assistance, leisure, recreation and volunteer opportunities. The 98 furnished studio-style units are nested in a supportive learning community designed to empower residents to reach their recovery goals.

"I'm currently working at an SRO and I've had residents ask me about treatment and I feel strongly that Phoenix is the best in the province. Phoenix gives more than one chance. The situation is assessed based on the person, not the group. I had been kicked out of a recovery house before. The residents voted me off the island and I was out. I relapsed within the month. I saw people at Phoenix relapse and given a second chance and then the person succeeded. At Phoenix they love their clients more and that helps the client through the relapse and onto the right path again."

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***"If it wasn't for Phoenix, I would be dead and if I wasn't dead, I'd be in jail."***

**- Natasha**

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Continues Natasha, "At Phoenix I thought if I didn't speak to anyone they couldn't vote me out. The staff gave me that time to understand that that wouldn't happen here. I could be myself. I think once I realized I could be myself, that's when I started to really be here and literally and figuratively unpack everything."

"My future goal is to become a tenant support worker. I'm currently a front desk worker and I'm hoping with the effort and drive I bring I can get there. My personal goal is to have a healthy romantic relationship. Make healthier choices."

"If it wasn't for Phoenix, I would be dead and if I wasn't dead, I'd be in jail. I'm still facing criminal charges and because of COVID it's still hanging over my head. I can't get closure. It's scary. Before Phoenix I didn't know how to cope with the stress. I'd just use. Now I'm coping."



**KAM SINGH**  
Addictions Counsellor



## MEET KAM: PHOENIX ADDICTIONS COUNSELLOR

Kam Singh is an Addictions Counsellor in the Stabilization and Transitional Living Residence program, a 90-day integrated residential addiction program at Phoenix. The primary role of an Addictions Counsellor is to provide individual counselling, group counselling, assessment and referrals. Above all is, it's about helping people.

"I read about it online, I thought I gotta be a part of Phoenix, this is what I want to do, this is where I know I can develop, this is where I know I can enhance on my craft, and figure out these modalities and therapies and how best to connect with people," remembers Kam.

Kam's journey to Phoenix was not an easy one, but he knew this was what he wanted to do for a living. "I wanted to have a voice in particular for the Indo-Canadian community which is my culture, I was seeing the destruction and everything that was going on."

A recent report from Fraser Health showed just how much help is needed, as overdose deaths for South Asian people increased by almost 300 percent between 2015 and 2018, compared to a 138 percent increase for non-South Asian people living in the region covered by the health authority.

Kam first started with Phoenix as a Program Assistant where he spent 7 months in this role before securing the one he had dreamt of. "As I was doing this work, I was watching people like David (Clinical Lead), like Dan (Director of Programs, Mental Health & Addictions), like Ryan (Manager of Addictions), as they come in, they are smiling and they are happy and talking about their work."

He sought out extra tasks and was eager to learn. When asked about his experience leading a treatment floor for the first time,

Kam said it was scary, he was unsure and second guessing himself. But that all changed quickly. "Now I'm doing it, I can connect with other people just like me; I came from a dark place where I had nobody around, now it's my opportunity to support people, guide them, show compassion," considers Kam.

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*"I love my job. I get to connect with human beings on a deep meaningful level and care for them as they navigate recovery."*

**- Kam**

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Kam sees the best in everyone and the incredible assets they each have. "I can help you get from here to here, just give me this time to work with you and this is something that motivates me and inspires me so much."

Now 18 months into his work, Kam is proud of how much he has grown since he started at Phoenix. Like many of his colleagues, Kam is working on his Canadian Certified Addiction Counsellor certification through the Canadian Addictions Counsellors Certification Federation. He credits his development and growth to the incredible team of professionals around him. "We hold space for each other and I feel managers and leaders like Ryan, David and Irene (Housing Manager) create space for me to practice and develop my craft as a helper."

"I love my job. I get to connect with human beings on a deep meaningful level and care for them as they navigate recovery. My Dad taught me to always be teachable. It's something I hope to pass on to my son Saavn."





RASHIDI  
YESUFU

EWR  
Program  
Coordinator



ROBBIE

EWR  
Volunteer and  
Phoenix Resident

## EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE: PHOENIX STAFF & RESIDENTS WORKING TOGETHER

The Extreme Weather Response (EWR) is a seasonal response to help homeless people during the coldest and wettest months of the year.

"It is a low barrier service," says Rashidi Yesufu, Phoenix Society Extreme Weather Response Program Coordinator. "People are admitted to the shelter on a first come first serve basis. We offered 10 mats for men and 5 for women. Our staff and volunteers were trained in de-escalation and received nonviolent crisis intervention training to support everyone in attendance. People received a bowl of soup when they came in and slept on padded mats on the floor. Lights were out at 11:00pm. In the morning juice and sandwiches were offered to our guests before they left and continued on with their day."

For Robbie, Phoenix Transitional Housing resident and EWR Volunteer, supporting the EWR was an eye-opening experience.

*"We offered a safe place for people and their belongings. They were safe and didn't have to worry about their stuff. It was hard to see the people stuck in their patterns of substance use and self-harm. I often thought or reflected on how happy I am to be in recovery."*

- Robbie

"At a Phoenix Transition Housing tenant meeting there was a call out for volunteers and some training to be a volunteer for the EWR shelter," recalls Robbie. "I loved volunteering for the EWR... I would show up early and get the set up done. We had 10 men's beds and 5 women's beds. Set up the cots and the soup and the donations table. Warm dry socks were the most sought-after thing at the donation table."

"We did have to turn a few people away which wasn't fun."

"We offered a safe place for people and their belongings," continues Robbie. "They could come in and have a bowl of soup and lay down. We'd show a movie or something and then lights out. They were safe and didn't have to worry about their stuff. It was hard to see the people stuck in their patterns of substance use and self-harm. I often thought or reflected on how happy I am to be in recovery."



PHOENIX EWR PROGRAM:  
OCTOBER 2019 - MARCH 2020



OPEN 89 NIGHTS, 1,054 PEOPLE SERVED

Another Phoenix Transitional Housing resident and EWR Volunteer, Keegan, recalls his experience assisting with the EWR program.

"People were very appreciative of the shelter that was offered to them. It was very rewarding for me to be able to greet them and make their bed and to give them that option to sleep inside and be warm. It was also a great outlet for me to give back and for me to further my understanding of the human condition of the addict and really understanding myself. Very Humbling."

Continues Keegan, "One of the guys is actually, we've had guys from here who have relapsed that utilized the shelter and are back at Phoenix now working on their recovery. One kid in particular, who came through out the whole winter, every night, is at Phoenix now in recovery. He was full of energy, young wired on drugs all winter. Now he's been at Phoenix for 2 months and he's doing awesome. He helped me bring my groceries up to my transition housing room the other day. It's pretty cool for me to watch his progress from being homeless to figuring out what it's like to be in recovery. Watching someone walk the path I just did."

"It was eye opening for me to see the homeless clients at the shelter; they weren't in recovery. That would have been my next step: homelessness. If I didn't have family who loved me it would have been me."



### MAY 2019

**Clean Streets program**, in partnership with the **Downtown Surrey Business Improvement Association**, began. With the \$30,000 funding, Phoenix transitional housing residents provide 3 hours of services/day, 7 days/week.

### SEPTEMBER 2019

**Phoenix Society 30th Anniversary Block Party** was attended by over 400 community members and partners. **MP Sarai, MLA Singh, MLA Ralston and MLA Bains** were all in attendance.



Received final approval on the **licensing of 32 beds in Quibble Creek**.

### NOVEMBER 2019



Phoenix received **\$100,000 from Surrey Housing and Homelessness Society** to relocate a 10 bed Stabilization program to a residential home in Surrey.

### MARCH 2020

Phoenix receives federal **Reaching Home** funding for a new Homeless Prevention & Housing Stabilization for Treatment Discharges program.

**Positive Living Fraser Valley Society (PLFV)** membership unanimously approved a merger with Phoenix Society.

### JUNE 2019

Phoenix signed new contract with **PHSA** for **8 additional treatment beds**.

### JULY 2019

The Phoenix team welcomed **MLA & Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Selina Robinson**, for a tour to share our Integrated Model of services.



Phoenix signed a contract with **Medical**

**Pharmacies** to provide client medications, electronic prescribing, electronic administration recording and improved medication reconciliation.

### OCTOBER 2019

Phoenix hosted **MLA and Minister of Mental Health and Addictions, Judy Darcy**, for a tour of our Quibble Creek and Phoenix Centre programs and had several of our clients share their stories with her.



Phoenix signed a contract for a new **Ageing Offender Program** at our Rising Sun Facility through **Corrections Canada**.

Phoenix once again operated an **Extreme Weather Response program** which opened early to those at risk due to unseasonably cold temperatures.

### DECEMBER 2019

Phoenix was successful in a grant application to **BC Gaming** for a **\$60,000** contribution to the purchase and outfitting of a food truck which will be run as a social enterprise to deliver employment opportunities to those who access our services and community meals to those in need.





KARI  
HACKETT

Director of  
Programs  
Fraser East



## MEET KARI: POSITIVE LIVING FRASER VALLEY

Kari has been involved in HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C work since 1994 when she first signed on with the North Island AIDS Coalition (NIAC).

"In 1994 I didn't like how people with HIV were being treated and I thought, not on my watch. I have dedicated my career to advocating for people living with HIV and Hepatitis C," recalls Kari.

After 10 years with NIAC, working her way up from a Harm Reduction/Outreach worker to the Director of Programs, in 2012 Kari took on an opportunity as the first Executive Director of the **Positive Living Fraser Valley Society (PLFV)**.

*"I am confident with this merger, that we will be stronger together and offer unique expertise to cover the gaps that exist in our health systems and ensure that quality care and options are available to provide specialized support for successful health, wellness and recovery."*

- Kari

With her leadership and vision, PLFV became a vibrant and responsive community agency with an increased scope of services designed to support some of the most vulnerable individuals in the Fraser Valley. But being a smaller non-profit organization, sustaining and growing programs required a never-ending cycle of grant applications and funding requests

which continued to place a strain on Kari and PLFV. It was her awareness for the need to sustain and better support PLFV's growing harm reduction needs and other vital HIV programs that led to Kari first approaching Phoenix in the fall of 2019, which ultimately led to the merger of PLFV with Phoenix in April 2020.

"We approached Phoenix because funding for AIDS service organizations is disappearing. The need isn't going away but the funding is. Merging with Phoenix will help ensure the future of these vital services for people living with HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C in the Fraser Valley."

Further, adds Kari, "I am confident with this merger, that we will be stronger together and offer unique expertise to cover the gaps that exist in our health systems and ensure that quality care and options are available to provide specialized support for successful health, wellness and recovery."

### Fraser Valley Programs & Services

- HIV Outreach Workers
- Public Education
- Prevention Assessment Referral Clinic (PARC)
- Street Reach – Harm reduction
- Medical Outreach and Referral Engagement



## MANAGED GROWTH

- Increase # of permanent housing units
- Increase # of transitional housing units
- Increase # of treatment beds
- Strengthen existing programs and services

# 1



# 2

## DIVERSIFYING REVENUE

- Develop comprehensive fundraising strategy
- Identify social enterprise opportunities
- Increase donations

## STRENGTHENING OUR VOICE

- Deepen our relationship with Indigenous and cultural service agencies
- Enhance internal communication
- Increase our digital presence
- Partner with specialized organizations

# 3



# 4

## INNOVATIVE SERVICE DELIVERY

- Continue to prioritize investment in innovation
- Evaluate current service opportunities to increase impact
- Research innovative models used elsewhere

## ORGANIZATIONAL EXCELLENCE

- Obtain accreditation through CARF
- Promote Phoenix as an employer of choice
- Enhance workplace culture and staff capacity
- Strengthen Governance

# 5

