

Heart to Heart

Quarterly Newsletter from ICCS



33,296

bed stays

47%

clients over the age of 50

October to
December
2025

402

clients supported
in housing

71

women stayed at the
Bridge to Housing Shelter

83,240

meals served in
housing

8,097

day time visits to the
Drop In Hub





From the Heart

We may not have had much snow this winter, but we've still felt our fair share of cold nights and wet days. Every time I step out of my house with my umbrella and rain gear for the quick run to my car, I'm reminded how easy it is to take that comfort for granted. More than a thousand people in our community don't have rain gear - let alone a dry car or home to escape to. Those little daily comforts are something most of us rarely think about, but for many, they make all the difference.

As we head into the end of the month, we're gearing up for Coldest Night of the Year, our annual fundraisers in Nanaimo and Oceanside. These events aren't just about raising funds—they're about shining a light on the needs in our community and showing that no one has to face the cold alone.

In this issue of Heart to Heart, we're reflecting on the last three months of work, sharing highlights from the holiday season, and celebrating the generosity, care, and support of our donors and volunteers. From warm meals served to new connections made, it's your support that keeps our programs thriving—and we hope you enjoy seeing the difference you've helped make.

Jennifer

• Development & Communications
Manager

Organizational Highlights

RISING HOPE COMMUNITY KITCHEN EXPANDS

We're excited to announce the completion of our new teaching kitchen in the Rising Hope Community Kitchen! This space allows us to host smaller groups and local organizations, giving them a place to prepare meals and build skills. It's already making a difference, supporting initiatives like the 7-10 Club and all the meals we prepare for the Drop-In Hub. Having this additional kitchen means more hands-on learning, more collaboration, and more opportunities to serve our community with nutritious, prepared food.

Have questions or looking to book kitchen space? Email: kitchenmanager@risinghope.ca.



Seeing residents overcome challenges, connect with the community here, re-connect with family members they've been apart from for years, and take meaningful steps forward, sometimes against big odds; reminds me why this work matters.

NANAIMO ARTWALK

This year's Nanaimo Artwalk was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate creativity and connection. We were grateful to display artwork in the community room at the Nanaimo Art Gallery - thank you for welcoming us into the space. Clients from our supportive housing programs proudly shared their work with the public, and a few pieces even found their forever homes. Having space in the community to highlight our clients' talents and creativity means so much. It also gave us a chance to connect with the public, share stories, and talk about the work we do every day. We're thankful for opportunities like Artwalk that bring people together through art and conversation.



SUPPORTING EVERY STEP OF THE JOURNEY



We're excited to share a great example of how our continuum of care works in action. One of our Mary's Place residents has recently been approved for a supported rent subsidy, allowing her to move into a regular market rental while continuing to receive support from our outreach worker in Nanaimo. This next step reflects her progress and independence, while ensuring she's still connected to the support she needs to thrive.

This move creates a space at Mary's Place, allowing someone from supportive housing to transition there, which in turn frees up a supportive housing spot for someone currently living in a shelter. It's a positive domino effect that helps people move forward at the right pace for them. Being able to walk alongside clients through every stage of their journey—and witness these transitions—is one of the most rewarding parts of our work.

We have had lots of success stories recently around people being housed that have been homeless for 10+ years, that fills my cup!

CREATIVITY AT THE DROP IN HUB

A new art program has started, and guests have been embracing the chance to create, express themselves, and share their incredible talent. The artwork coming out of these sessions has truly amazed us, each piece tells a story of resilience, reflection, and hope.

Having a positive outlet for expression is so important. Art gives people a way to process their experiences, connect with others, and find joy in the act of creating something new.



HEALTHY ART PRACTICES

We recently hosted a Mental Health Art Therapy Workshop across several of our housing sites, and it was an incredibly meaningful experience. Residents had the chance to create artwork, share stories, and explore healthy ways to cope with life's challenges.

Vancouver Island University nursing practicum students were on hand to support the sessions, gaining firsthand experience in how mental health can be supported in different, creative ways. These opportunities allow future health professionals to see the power of safe, expressive spaces and the impact of compassionate, person-centred support.



HOLIDAY SPIRIT AT ICCS

Thanks to the generosity of our community, we were able to put together Christmas gifts for each of our 250+ residents, as well as over 100 packages for guests at the Drop-In Hub. The impact of these gifts goes far beyond the wrapping - they bring connection, joy, and a reminder that someone cares. For some, it may be the only gift they receive this year, or even in years past, making it an incredibly meaningful moment. A heartfelt thank you to everyone for helping us share the spirit of the season and make the holidays brighter for so many.

- The Shoebox Project
- Everyone Deserves a Smile (Georgia Ave)
- Berwick on the Lake
- Brechin United Church
- Coastline Church
- St. Pauls Lutheran Church
- Island Health IT Department
- Plume Salon Collective
- Oceanside Community Church (Parksville)
- Altrusa Nanaimo
- Coastal Community Credit Union



7 YEARS STRONG AT HEARTH NEWCASTLE PLACE

This November marks 7 years of Newcastle Place, and what an incredible journey it has been. Over the past seven years, hundreds of people have found stability, connection, and community within these walls. None of this would be possible without the amazing staff who show up every day with compassion, patience, and unwavering dedication. Their work has helped change lives and create a place where people feel seen, supported, and valued.

Newcastle Place has truly become a community all its own. From the communal garden that brings people together, to shared activities, creative artwork, and daily moments of support, it is a space where belonging grows and hope takes root.

Thank you to everyone who has been part of this story. Your hard work and heart have made Newcastle Place a vital part of our community and a meaningful home for so many.

Here's to seven years of making a difference, and a reminder of just how essential supportive housing like Newcastle Place is for our community.



ORCA PLACE IS GROWING BY THREE



We're excited to share that, in partnership with BC Housing, Space at Orca Place is being retrofitted to add three new housing units. This means we'll soon be able to welcome three new residents into our supportive community. While construction is underway, we're making sure current residents continue to enjoy a comfortable and welcoming home.

These new units will provide safe, stable spaces for people to begin their own journeys toward stability and well-being. We can't wait for the work to be finished and to introduce our new neighbours to the Orca Place family - adding even more warmth, friendship, and connection to our community. This expansion is a great example of what we can accomplish together when partners and community come together to meet local housing needs.

“
Since moving here (Newcastle Place), I've felt safe, respected, and part of a community that cares.
”

HOLIDAY CHEER IN THE RISING HOPE KITCHEN

Thanksgiving and Christmas were made extra special this year for guests of the Drop-In Hub, thanks to the care and creativity of our volunteers in the Rising Hope Community Kitchen. Volunteers came together to prepare festive sandwiches and seasonal treats, adding warmth and comfort to these meaningful days. With the generous support of the Lantzville Rotary Club, we were able to purchase turkeys, stuffing, cranberry sauce, and all the fixings that helped turn a simple meal into a holiday celebration.



Christmas brought even more cheer, with the addition of house-made treats lovingly prepared and shared with guests on the day. These moments of connection, good food, and holiday spirit reminded everyone that they are seen, valued, and part of a caring community. We're deeply grateful to our volunteers and partners who helped make the season brighter.



Volunteer Highlights

Our volunteer-led Art Kit sessions throughout ICCS housing sites continue to bring joy, connection, and inspiration to both residents and volunteers. A recent session at David's Place perfectly illustrates the impact these activities can have.

During a recent clay sculpture session, our clients' creativity led to some truly special moments. One new participant noticed a rose in the instruction booklet and was reminded of the rose symbol from his old band, so meaningful, he even has it tattooed on his hand! He sculpted a beautiful rose, connecting with a part of his story.

Another client created a small Mickey Mouse figure as a gift for his mom, thoughtfully adding a tiny detail that referenced her smoking habit. Moments like these show how art can help clients connect with their own stories and the people they care about, while fully immersing themselves in the creative process. Volunteering in these sessions is a joy, it's inspiring to watch clients express themselves, find joy, and make meaningful connections through art.



Sign up to be a volunteer today! Already a volunteer, log into your account to see available opportunities

have questions? email Sara at:
volunteercoordinator@iccare.ca

Client Connections

One of our residents arrived at Orca Place during a really tough chapter of his life. He was navigating significant mental health and substance use challenges, and at times the road ahead felt overwhelming. With steady support from our staff and his Island Health care team, he began working through the many steps required before entering treatment. This meant appointments, TB testing, X-rays, and virtual check-ins, each one bringing its own barriers, delays, and frustrations.

Despite all of this, he kept showing up. He continued going to work, stayed engaged, and didn't give up when things got complicated. Coordinating transportation and booking a ferry to treatment was another major hurdle, but with encouragement and problem-solving support, he made it there successfully.

Since starting treatment, he's reached out to thank our team and shared that he's continuing to work on himself. His journey is a powerful reminder that progress isn't always quick or easy—but with the right support, patience, and belief, people can push through real obstacles and take meaningful steps toward recovery.



Donor Recognition

From October to December 2025, your generous support has continued to make a meaningful difference in the lives of those we serve - thank you. Every donation helps us offer personalized care and vital resources, whether it's a warm meal, mental health support, or a safe place to call home. Because of you, we can meet people where they are and walk alongside them as they work toward a brighter future.

- St. Andrews Presbyterian Church
- St. Columba Presbyterian Church
- Nanaimo Moose Lodge #1052
- Nanaimo Alliance Church
- Hammond Bay Baptist Church
- Nanaimo Lions Club
- Ardea Foundation
- St. Andrews Womens Presbyterian
- Hub City Lions
- Rotary Club of Lantzville
- Rob Grey
- Rotary Club of Parksville
- First Baptist Church
- Women of the Moose
- All of our individual donors
- Harmac Pacific Employee Charitable Donation Foundation

Get your monthly Spark of Joy

Become a monthly donor and receive a spark of joy in your inbox each month! Your ongoing support helps sustain our programs and the people we serve year-round. Every month, our donors get a quick update showing the real impact of their generosity - lives changed, communities strengthened, and hope shared. Stay connected, see the difference you're making, and be part of creating lasting change. Join our monthly donor family today and make an ongoing impact!



Coming Up



coldest
*night
OF THE YEAR

FEBRUARY 28th, 2026
walk / donate / volunteer

across the country.
close to home.
support community.

cnoy.org/nanaimo & cnoy.org/oceanside

thank you to our
Lead Sponsor 

Coldest Night of the Year – Nanaimo & Oceanside is happening on February 28th, 2026! This family-friendly winter walk brings our communities together to support neighbours who need a helping hand.

Funds raised go into ICCS's Community Impact Fund, a flexible fund that allows us to respond in real time to people's needs—whether that's practical support, life skills programs, job readiness help, or other resources that help someone move forward with confidence. All funds raised at each walk stay in the community where they are raised, making a direct impact for local neighbours.

There are many ways to be part of this amazing event:

- Sign up to walk or start a team with friends, family, or coworkers
- Donate to support the Community Impact Fund directly
- Volunteer at the event to help make it run smoothly
- Share the event through your social media channels

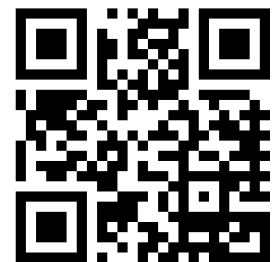


Make it easy to share and spread the word by following ICCS on Facebook and Instagram - we post ready-to-share graphics and updates that help your network get involved.

Join us on February 28th and be part of a community effort that makes a real difference in the lives of our neighbours!



nanaimo



oceanside