

DAN'S LEGACY FOUNDATION



ANNUAL REPORT

JUNE 2020 - JUNE 2021



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

From June 2020 to June 2021 Dan's Legacy faced unprecedented challenges due to the emergence of the coronavirus pandemic as well as the worsening opioid overdose health crisis. Our therapy team identified a 50% increase in hospitalizations for our youth clients from psychosis, overdose and suicide attempts, as well as fielded a 50% increase in referrals to our counselling and wrap-around programs from government agencies and other community organizations. In the same way that we help our clients realize their own potential, we managed these challenges by looking for the opportunities. Funding for our counselling and food bank programs increased substantially, culminating with a \$1.35million grant from the BC Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions. This funding will allow us to double our therapy team to 10 counsellors, two social workers and two outreach workers, and facilitate the growth of our 24/7 On-call Service to hospital emergency departments from a pilot to a full program. Connecting with youth in crisis as soon as they ask for help is the first critical step on the journey to physical and mental stabilization, at which point trauma counselling will be most effective. Ensuring our clients had more access to wrap-around support we expanded our community partnerships in East Vancouver and Surrey, as well as launched our "Intro to Cook" job-skills training program in January, 2021, fully funded by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training. This program, which will help marginalized youth find stable employment in the food service industry, helps to ensure the maintenance of our clients' positive mental health, lead independent lives, and become contributing members of the community.

CORE COUNSELLING TEAM

- **TOM LITTLEWOOD, MPSY, PROGRAM DIRECTOR & LEAD THERAPIST**
- **KATHRYN PRIEST-PERIES, MSW, RSW, RCC, PHD (CAND) ., PROGRAM MANAGER & SUPERVISING THERAPIST**
- **KELSEY WRIGHT, MSW, RSW, THERAPIST**
- **JUAN C. PRAT, MA, RCC, THERAPIST**
- **LINDEN T. Y. CHOI, MACP, EXAT, THERAPIST**
- **DANILO JOSE VILLACRUSIS, MACP, PART-TIME THERAPIST & FITNESS INSTRUCTOR**

KEY FACTS

	2020	2021
Number of therapists	5	10
Number of youth clients	250+	450
Yearly client load per therapist	45	45
Average monthly sessions per therapist	200	300
Outreach hours per month	150	250
Indigenous youth clients	45%	45%
LGBTQ2S+ youth clients	30%	30%
Client overdoses per month	10	15
Average fatalities per monthly overdoses	1	2
Clients requiring hospitalization	25	25



**STRATEGIC PLANNING
WORKSHOPS
WITH DELOITTE**
JANUARY 2020

CORE COUNSELLING PROGRAM

Dan's Legacy's counselling program is holistic, based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and Mindfulness. We balance psychological principles with proper diet and exercise and focus on the role that past trauma and abuse now plays in our clients' dysfunctional lives. The majority of our clients are youth in or aging-out of care who have significant barriers accessing Health Authority mental health programs or private counsellors. We go directly to the youth wherever they are, have no wait list and provide our services for free.

The COVID-19 pandemic had a direct and negative effect on our youth clients, many of whom experienced heightened levels of anxiety, depression, and psychosis. Our team of therapists continued to provide in-person counselling to the youth, ensuring that we exercised all recommended safety precautions. As many youth were too overwhelmed to meet us for sessions, we went to them. This allowed our counsellors to conduct wellness checks, deliver food hampers and conduct counselling sessions on socially distanced walks. This provided the client the opportunity to speak freely, especially if they were living in an unsafe environment. Although we fielded a 50% growth in referrals from other agencies, we faced numerous challenges trying to meet more youth for indoor counselling sessions due to the rigorous sanitization procedures employed between each client. We mitigated that challenge by adding virtual counselling sessions to our list of services, and ensured our clients had the communications technology (phones and phone plans) to connect with us. This was crucial as the youth often rely on free WiFi to connect, and many outlets (such as cafés and community centres) were closed in the opening months of the pandemic.

Providing our clients with phones, food, safe housing, and help accessing community wrap-around programs are key factors in the stabilization process that forms the foundation of support for our trauma counselling program. As social workers were following work-from-home safety directives, our therapists were spending approximately 30% of their time providing this social work stabilizing support. We mitigated that issue by hiring our own social worker, as well as a youth outreach worker. This freed our counselling team to focus 100% on therapy, to ensure we were providing the best service to our clients.

A return to normal operations will depend on how quickly the threat of COVID-19 dissipates and we are closely monitoring all Health Authority mandates. However, with our larger team and expanded community partnerships, we believe we can double our client list to 900 in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.

FITNESS PROGRAM

COVID-19 also had an impact on our Fitness Program as gyms, community centres and other fitness facilities all closed at the start of the pandemic. Our therapist/fitness instructor redesigned the program, creating personalized at-home workout plans for the youth, as well as meeting them for social distancing walks and therapy sessions.

Number of youth who participate in this program each month: 25

QUEER FEMME WORKSHOPS

This program was suspended as we were unable to access the space in the community centre where it took place, which was closed temporarily due to COVID-19.

LAND-BASED INTERVENTIONS / EAST VAN DAN'S

After a successful year of clinically and culturally supported trips that brought our Indigenous youth clients back to the land to experience emotional, mental, physical and spiritual healing, we ended the summer with a few socially distanced day trips: to Whistler, hiking up the Grouse Grind, and a sage picking retreat in Merritt for the program leaders, under the guidance of an Indigenous Elder. COVID-19 safety protocols required the suspension of further camping trips, however we revised the program and are preparing to launch a series of Indigenous Cultural Workshops under the umbrella program of East Van Dan's. Led by an Indigenous Elder with whom we have worked for many years, urban Indigenous youth will discover connections to community through song, storytelling, drum making and other cultural experiences. Collingwood Neighbourhood House in East Vancouver is providing us with a large indoor space to run the program, and thanks to a recent donation of a van from Coast Capital Savings, we will be able to transport food and other equipment to hold the workshops in outdoor venues.

FOOD BANK & SUNDAY HAVEN DINNER

Food insecurity is a serious concern for the majority of our youth clients, many of whom are homeless and all of whom are hungry. Our twice-weekly food bank and Sunday Haven community dinner, which we operate out of our community partner Aunt Leah's Place in New Westminster, mitigates these issues.

We collect surplus food seven days a week from three grocery stores and one food distribution centre in Vancouver and Burnaby, keeping a portion for our programs and delivering the rest to 12 other food banks/soup kitchens in the community.

Each month we collect, on average:

- more than 15,000kg of edible food
- which creates approximately 25,000 meals
- valued at \$85,000
- and feeds over 800 people

**Source: FoodMesh data April 2021*

Our youth clients rely heavily on this program which supplies them with nutritious food; we also enhance the grocery hampers with gift cards to purchase extra items such vitamin supplements, baby formula, and other essentials not included in the surplus food donation.

Designed originally as an outreach program, the Sunday Haven community dinner has grown from a handful of regular youth to approximately 30 youth, as well as young families with their children, who attend each week. COVID-19 protocols saw us move the indoor, sit-down meal to outdoors, where we provided pre-packed grocery hampers and hot meals in takeaway containers. This program also owes its success to our dedicated volunteers who come each week to cook, clean, pack up hampers and serve the youth.

Number of youth who participate in this program weekly: 30 individuals / 5 families



DAN'S WAREHOUSE JOB-SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM INTRO TO COOK

After a full year of delay due to COVID-19, we received permission from the Fraser Health Authority to launch our Into to Cook job-skills training program in January, 2021. With only one month's notice to recruit participants for the program, we started with a cohort of 6 students.

Our community partners at Union Gospel Mission (UGM) in New Westminster generously provided their commercial kitchen pro-bono, and funding for the pilot intake was secured through the Industry Training Authority and corporate donations. As was expected, the number of participants fluctuated over the four-month instructional period, as some youth needed to step away temporarily to manage mental health challenges. Each student is supported by one of our therapists, as well as the social worker assigned to the program.

The students not only acquired basic level training as cooks but put those skills to use each day by providing the prep work for the chefs at UGM, as well as our own Sunday Haven dinner. Feedback from the management and clients of UGM was overwhelmingly positive, as we introduced new meal options that incorporated fresh produce and other ingredients from our surplus food collection.

"I have been extremely encouraged by the positive working relationship that my team and myself have experienced with the overall leadership and staffing of Dan's Legacy."

Bill Wong, Manager, UGM New Westminster



In May we graduated four students; three completed the program and one left early, moving up to further training through the Professional Cook 1 program at Vancouver Community College.

When COVID-19 restrictions abate, we will assist the graduates in finding work placements in commercial kitchens. Until then they will continue to work with us at UGM, funded by a Work Experiences Grant from the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction.

This program has been fully funded for a year through a grant from the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training, administered through the Industry Training Authority



CLIENT STORIES

"Charlie"

"Charlie" is an 18-year-old South Asian transgender youth who was referred to Dan's Legacy's counselling program through a family friend for depression, suicidal ideation, substance use concerns, and a history of sexual abuse and trauma. He has kept up with weekly counselling sessions for the past six months, primarily over the phone due to COVID-19 safety protocols. After his grandparents kicked him out of their home, "Charlie's" counsellor helped him connect to stable housing through one of Dan's Legacy's community partners. He is currently at a long-term safehouse and is awaiting more permanent housing. "Charlie" is now receiving financial support through a BC Adult Youth Agreement and is enrolled in post-secondary creative writing classes for the summer 2021 semester. "Charlie" has not used hard substances in nearly two months, and regularly sees a psychiatrist who supports his mental health medication management. "Charlie's" counsellor works with him using primarily Motivational Interviewing (MI) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) strategies. The counsellor also uses client-centred and trauma-informed frameworks to encourage feelings of safety and a sense of empowerment for the client.

"Daniella"

"Daniella" is a 16-year-old Southeast Asian female living in Vancouver. She was referred to Dan's Legacy's counselling program through BC Children's Hospital following the recent loss of a close family member to an overdose. "Daniella" recently secured independent living through her social worker and has returned to school after taking several months off. She has been with Dan's Legacy counselling program for approximately 4 months and attends weekly counselling sessions in-person with her therapist at a community centre in her neighbourhood. Grief and trauma counselling have been the focus of their work together. "Daniella" and her counsellor have begun working on processing the trauma she has experienced as a result of finding her family member after they died. Counselling is a safe space for Daniella to grieve for her family member, integrate this loss into her life, and find ways to stay positively connected to them which has personal meaning to her and their relationship.

"Chris"

“Chris” is a 22-year-old non-binary Métis youth who experienced serious and repeated trauma throughout childhood. When he first connected with Dan’s Legacy’s therapist, he was unable to care for himself. With intensive trauma-informed therapy, “Chris” not only cares for himself but also looks after his girlfriend and his sister. Integral to his healing has been access to healthy food through Dan’s Legacy’s food bank and Sunday Haven weekly hot meal program, both of which are supported by our recovered food collection program. Sunday Haven provides a sense of community to many youth, most of whom have aged out of foster care and are struggling to survive in the Lower Mainland on income assistance. Most of “Chris” monthly cheque pays for rent, and without Dan’s Legacy’s food bank he would be facing serious food insecurity issues. “Chris” is an excellent cook and takes pride in not only cooking for his housemates, but regularly invites some of the other youth over for a hot meal. Being the person who takes care of others has had a positive impact on “Chris” self-esteem, which helps to maintain mental health stability. Dan’s Legacy’s therapist is encouraging him to enroll in our Intro to Cook program at the next intake.

"Tanya"

“Tanya” is a 21-year-old Indigenous woman who has been working with Dan’s Legacy’s therapy team for 6 months. She is dealing with severe anxiety and depression and is living in an extremely unsafe situation with an abusive boyfriend. The most dangerous time in a woman’s life is when she is leaving an abuser, and “Tanya” is working with Dan’s Legacy’s therapist and social worker to devise a plan to remove herself from the situation and into safe housing. Because she relied on her abusive partner for financial support, the Social Worker helped her apply for income assistance which will be followed by a Person’s with Disability pension from the provincial government. Crippling anxiety prevented “Tanya” from being able to maintain healthy hygiene practices, and the Social Worker is providing her with clean clothes, grooming products, and other healthcare support, all funded by Dan’s Legacy. “Tanya” is also enrolled in Dan’s Legacy’s “Intro to Cook” job-skills training program, which will help provide her with an avenue to secure employment. This continued financial independence, as well as therapy to help her manage anxiety and depression, will help her to live independently and could very well save her life.

"Cindy"

"Cindy" is 23 years old and has been receiving counselling services from Dan's Legacy for the past 5 years. She grew up in a very troubled family in which she was raised by a single mother with chronic mental illness. This has resulted in Cindy entering adulthood as an acutely anxious person with very few life skills. She entered adult life with an overall fear of almost everything, and little ability to make safe and healthy choices. "Cindy" has been connected with 3 of the therapists at Dan's Legacy over the time she has been with the counselling program. Her first therapist worked with her to provide basis life-skills including budgeting, working with housing workers, making safe choices, and emotional self-regulation. Her second therapist supported her to work with community mental health to receive a diagnosis and helpful medication. In addition, it was during this time that "Cindy" was supported to obtain her Disability designation with the Income Assistance program. At present, "Cindy" is working with her therapist on issues related to a history of choosing abusive partners, her misuse of alcohol and drugs to cope, and connecting her with community supports related to acquiring food, and other affordable necessities. Learning conflict resolution skills and problem-solving continue to be issues where Cindy will need support.



DAN'S LEGACY'S SUPPORTERS 2020-2021

Core Counselling & Wrap-Around Programs/COVID-19 Emergency Response

2020 June - December

COVID-19 Community Response Fund – Surrey Cares	\$75,000	Counselling
COVID-19 Community Response Fund – Surrey Cares	\$12,845	Social Worker
Youth Philanthropy Initiative – Dr. Charles Best Secondary	\$2,500	General Funds
The Co-Operators	\$20,000	Intro to Cook
PayPal Giving Foundation	\$3,000	Counselling
Children's Aid Foundation	\$100,000	Counselling
Green Shield Holiday Giving Campaign	\$2,000	General Funds
Redstamp Graphic Design	\$425	Memberships
Pacific Backlot	\$1,000	General Funds

2021 – January - June

Ministry of Mental Health & Addictions	\$1,350,000	Counselling
Good Food Access Fund	\$50,000	Grocery Gift Cards
Industry Training Authority	\$32,640	Intro to Cook
Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills & Training	\$457,004	Intro to Cook
Ministry of Social Development & Poverty Reduction	\$25,000	Intro to Cook
Ministry of Municipal Affairs (BC Gaming)	\$30,000	Counselling
Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General	\$30,000	East Van Dan's
Young Family Foundation	\$15,000	Counselling
Coast Capital Savings – van donation	\$17,000	East Van Dan's
Youth Philanthropy Initiative – Sidra Danekari	\$1,250	General
Lawson Foundation	\$10,000	General

