

# Dan's Warehouse



Dan's  
Warehouse  
Project 2022

A clinically supervised work-skills training program for youth at risk

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## Executive Summary

In January 2021, Dan's Legacy launched its work-skills training program for youth aging out of care, Indigenous youth, young women survivors of gendered violence and new immigrants. These young people experience significant barriers to post-secondary education or trades training programs, and we are closing this gap in opportunities. The program covers three occupational models which will be introduced in two phases: Phase 1 - Intro to Cook (2021), Phase 2 - Commercial Vehicle Operation and Warehouse Operations (2023). Recruitment, assessment, training and placing of clients in these occupations are the primary goals, along with providing therapeutic counselling, life-skills instruction and secure housing to the participants, some of whom may be affected by mental health issues. The Dan's Warehouse project is a unique job-skills training program that operates under the clinical supervision of Dan's Legacy's trauma-informed therapists who are specially trained to work with at-risk youth, increasing the likelihood of graduation from the program and the ability to secure and maintain jobs.

The project is a collaboration between Dan's Legacy, and Union Gospel Mission (New Westminster) which supplies the commercial kitchen training space.

While most Lower Mainland culinary training schools design their courses around industry needs, the Dan's Warehouse courses will be geared towards meeting the needs of the community.

## 2022 Update

We completed the pilot of "Intro to Cook" in March, 2022 and are now into our second year of the program. We enrolled 24 students and over 20 are now employed or enrolled in Red Seal training programs. We continue to work with the rest of the youth to help prepare them for success.

**Paid practicum work experiences** opportunities are provided to students in the final month of training, and this funding has been secured by the BC Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to support 5 students this year.



## Details of Program

### Commercial Food Production & Culinary Program

There is an abundance of surplus food available for collection at Lower Mainland grocery store chains, as is evidenced by the 25 years of surplus food reclamation managed by Dan's Legacy's staff and associates. While the surplus food is unspoiled and completely safe for consumption, it has little shelf-life left and must be used immediately. With the supervision of trained industry professionals, students in the Commercial Food Production model prepare, cook and package the foods to be delivered to various organizations including food banks, soup kitchens other not-for-profit groups providing food security in the community. This "teaching kitchen" is professionally outfitted with industry-standard equipment to manage large volumes of product and ensure commercial quality is maintained. Students receive FoodSafe Certification, food preparation and industry equipment training, as well as assistance in finding industry employment upon graduation from the program.

### Warehousing

We propose a warehouse facility that supports the "teaching kitchen" in the management of product receipt and delivery. The commercial warehouse will contain receiving and delivery bays, a sorting area and long-term storage area. Recovered surplus food will be sorted and then: sent out immediately to our community partners in food security for their food banks and meal programs; be directed to the teaching kitchen for preparation before future distribution; or stored if shelf-life permits for future distribution to program partners. Students will receive training in Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Working at Heights and Forklift Operator Training.

### Vehicle Operation

The program will obtain, maintain and operate a fleet of vans and trucks to be used in the collection and distribution of recovered surplus food. Students of the program will receive training in: commercial vehicle operation; basic maintenance; and safe driving practices. In many cases, having a driver's license is critical to gainful employment. The program will assist students in either obtaining a Class 5 N license (if they start without a license), or graduating to obtain a Class 4 (if they start with a license). Graduates from the program could find employment as professional taxi and truck drivers, couriers and bus drivers.

## Details of Program (con't.)

### Program Format

The four-month training schedule is based on the education delivery model created and delivered by Dan's Legacy's Program Director Tom Littlewood at the Sanctuary Foundation for over twenty years. The process is as follows:

- Clients begin with a workshop within the category they choose.
- Instructors are soon able to determine which students will thrive in the four-month module.
- Initial intakes are usually double the number of students to account for attrition in the first few weeks.

After the four-month work-skills training module we then place the client into a two-week work practicum with a potential employer. Most will stay on as a new hire with that company. If they do not find work right away, we keep them working within the project until another work practicum, or immediate employment, can be arranged.

Clients diagnosed with spectrum disorders such as Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or high functioning Autism/Asperger's, will audit the course, with the clinical supervision and support of our therapists, for as long as necessary to master the work-skills they will need to gain employment. We plan to take on two such clients within each work-skills Training Module and will cover the costs for their tuition and counselling support through our fundraising efforts.



### History of Success

For 18 years (from 1984 to 2002), Tom Littlewood founded and operated the Sanctuary Foundation in the Lower Mainland. This organization offered work-skills training to youth in bicycle mechanics, computer technology, and in the ski lift and marine industries. The youth received a training certificate, and most found work in the industry of their choice or a related industry. Many used these first jobs to move up in their industries or in similar careers. We have an established model and the experience to launch this training program again through the Dan's Warehouse project, helping to meet the need of at-risk youth for job skills training. Gainful employment lessens the risk of homelessness, cascading mental health issues and suicide. It's a Harm Prevention strategy with proven success.



## Growing Our Food Security Operations

Our current surplus food recovery program collects and distributes approximately 15,000kg worth of food each month and ensures more than 750 people in Metro Vancouver meet their basic food needs. Our team has also trained two other non-profit organizations in food reclamation, widening our reach on food security in the community. Dan's Legacy is a distributor with FoodMesh, a surplus food diversion network that recovers food from every Save-On-Foods store in British Columbia.

## Participants

We are accepting referrals from individuals and other agencies supporting youth at risk, and recruit participants from our current community partners:

- Aunt Leah's Place – New Westminster
- Aunt Leah's Place – Vancouver
- Union Gospel Mission – New Westminster
- Broadway Youth Resources Centre – Vancouver
- Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre – Vancouver
- Collingwood Neighbourhood House – Vancouver
- Mount Pleasant Neighbourhood House – Vancouver
- Little Mountain Neighbourhood House – Vancouver
- Pacific Community Resources Society – North Surrey (in process)
- Pacific Community Resources Society – South Surrey (in process)
- Guildford Learning Centre – Surrey
- Fraser Region Aboriginal Friendship Centre Association (FRAFCA) – Surrey
- Alexandra House – South Surrey (White Rock)
- Kwikwetlem First Nation
- Katzie First Nation (in process)
- Zero Ceiling Society - Whistler

## Contact us

Dan's Legacy Foundation  
5449 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Delta, BC

**Barbara Coates**      604-329-9186      barb.coates@danslegacy.com  
**Tom Littlewood**      604-999-9136      tom.littlewood@danslegacy.com  
[www.danslegacy.com](http://www.danslegacy.com)