

CENTRAL CITY FOUNDATION



Community Survey:
Five minutes that
will help shape the
future of our city

Djaka Blais
from Hogan's
Alley Society

Plus...
Profiles in
Community
Leadership

FALL 2025

HELP MAKE LASTING CHANGE HAPPEN

Real change doesn't happen overnight. For more than 118 years, Central City Foundation has been working here in Vancouver to build a community where everyone has access to health, well-being and opportunities to succeed. When you make a gift, it's not just a donation – you're standing alongside a network of community partners working to build safe, healthy, and just communities in Vancouver's inner city.

Together, we've made change happen! Let's keep it up by continuing to invest in the possibilities that make a brighter future possible for everyone.

A GIVING SEASON GIFT...

Will support trusted community organizations, cultural healing programs, and housing initiatives that keep families and neighbours connected and safe.

BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR FOR AS LITTLE AS \$25...

And be part of a powerful collective effort to create lasting change.

LEAVE A LEGACY...

And change lives for years to come. Reach out to us at legacies@centralcityfoundation.ca to explore which tools are best for you.

Please give generously to support Central City Foundation by donating at centralcityfoundation.ca

If you have any questions or would prefer to make an offline donation, please feel free to contact our office at 604-683-2263.



5 MiNS = \$5 DONATiON

Take Central City Foundation's 2025 Community Survey and tell us what a connected and thriving community looks like to you.

Results from this survey will inform a new Central City Foundation-led Community Roadmap, informed by our 118 years of experience walking alongside the people who live and work in the Downtown Eastside.

To take the 2025 Community Survey, scan the QR code or visit centralcityfoundation.ca

FOR EVERY SURVEY
SUBMITTED



WILL BE DONATED
TO DTES COMMUNITY
GROUPS.



CHANGE CAN HAPPEN

PROFILES IN COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP

This year, we are once again celebrating examples of extraordinary community leadership and innovation from the organizations we walk alongside and support. These individuals and their organizations have demonstrated that change can happen in our community. As part of this celebration, we asked each of our profiled leaders to share their thoughts on leadership, community, and hope for a brighter future. To read more of these in-depth interviews, visit centralcityfoundation.ca.





DJAKA BLAIS

Executive Director, Hogan's Alley Society

We are thrilled to celebrate Djaka for her leadership and advocacy for culturally appropriate housing, unwavering commitment to equity in city planning and her role in advancing the redevelopment of Hogan's Alley as a hub of Black cultural and economic vibrancy. Her work as the first Executive Director at Hogan's Alley Society has been instrumental in reasserting the presence, contributions, and rights of Black communities in a city that purposely displaced and attempted to erase the once-thriving Hogan's Alley community. Through Djaka's leadership, Hogan's Alley Society is championing a powerful movement for land justice, cultural preservation and community-led development.

"I find hope in the ways our community is already shaping change. The Hogan's Alley Community Land Trust is one powerful example — it will provide affordable housing, social enterprise spaces, and a cultural hub that celebrates Black history, reversing some of the harms caused by displacement. Nora Hendrix Place gives me hope too — it shows what's possible when housing is designed to meet people where they are, providing stability and a pathway to belonging."

— Djaka Blais

KATHLEEN LEAHY

Director, UBC Learning Exchange

For over 18 years, Kathleen has worked tirelessly to establish the UBC Learning Exchange as a valued community asset that makes learning accessible to the community. She has worked to create opportunities for students, academics, and other partners to come and learn from the DTES community. By turning the idea of expertise on its head, she has been able to ensure the voices of those in the DTES have been afforded the respect and value they deserve. Kathleen's extensive experience in community development has made her a sought-after collaborator in innovative projects in the DTES, bringing together diverse partners who might not otherwise collaborate.

"Relationships and connections are at the heart of our work at the UBC Learning Exchange. We recognize that learning can involve risk and vulnerability, so we focus on creating a welcoming environment where people feel safe to bring their whole selves. Respecting and celebrating every step of someone's journey helps maintain a sense of dignity and builds trust. For community members this means having lots of opportunities to try things out, explore interests, and be recognized as the experts of their own lives. We aim to co-create everything we do — ensuring that learning goes both ways."

— Kathleen Leahy





BLACK + INDIGENOUS DESIGN COLLECTIVE

We are excited to celebrate the Black + Indigenous Design Collective. Also known as BIDC, this group of designers, artists, curators and educators has been building the capacity of the next generation of Black and Indigenous leaders. Their programming is the first of its kind in Vancouver, and has successfully created a community where learners can continue to grow and develop beyond its programs. By addressing the significant underrepresentation of Indigenous people and those of African descent in architecture and design through education rooted in futurism and decolonized leadership, they are setting the stage for a new paradigm in the world of built environments.

"With less than 1% of Black and Indigenous representation in spatial design fields such as urban planning, landscape architecture, architecture and public art, we are working to increase representation in these fields and empower Black + Indigenous communities with the skills to be at the forefront of planning, designing and leading their communities. Central City Foundation has been crucial in not only seeing the value in us as organizers, but in our students and the futures that they believe in."

— BIDC



DON SHAFER

Radio Personality and host of Central City Foundation's Hope Dialogue

For the last decade, Don has been working tirelessly to amplify community voices, build platforms for dialogue, and demonstrate that authentic conversations can lead to deeper understanding and healing. Following his decades of leadership in Canadian broadcasting, Don pursued a PhD at the Institute for Gender, Race, Sexuality and Social Justice department of Social Justice at UBC. His research explored how the words we use can either open space for meaningful dialogue or reinforce division. Don's commitment to community activism through his support and leadership with the Hope Dialogue Radio Show has helped Central City Foundation publicly lift community voices to the forefront.

"Polarization has gained mainstream traction because it addresses the visceral and often dramatic divisions in our choice of words and our relationships with our families, communities and society. I'd like to believe that each of us can help change the world one conversation at a time. I hope what we are doing helps people feel seen. I hope it sparks reflection. And I hope it gives listeners the tools and encouragement to engage more thoughtfully at home and in their communities. At a time when we're increasingly divided, these conversations are an invitation to connect."

— Don Shafer

MARGARET PFOH

Chief Executive Officer, Aboriginal Housing Management Association

A Profiles in Community Leadership celebrant in 2022, we would like to once again recognize Margaret Pfoh for her incredible vision and leadership. For over 25 years, Margaret has continued to foster important community development through empowerment and respect. In recent years, AHMA has launched innovative, first-of-its-kind initiatives like the Urban, Rural and Northern Indigenous Housing Strategy for BC, Complex Care Housing, and the Rental Protection Fund.

In 2025, AHMA is launching an Indigenous Youth-led Housing Strategy for Indigenous Youth and a Gender-based Violence Indigenous Housing Strategy. By ensuring that AHMA's strategic plan aligns with national and international advancements in Indigenous housing, Margaret's work continues to shape policy, partnerships and the future of Indigenous housing rights on a broad scale.



OUR DONORS ARE INVESTING IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

When you donate to Central City Foundation, you can feel confident that you are investing in effective programming and services. Not only do we walk alongside social service organizations every day, but we also build long-lasting relationships with our community partners. This ensures our donors' values are honoured with each grant made.

Our approach to grant-making is rooted in our long history of nurturing innovative community-led initiatives that address systemic issues affecting the inner city's population. By funding projects that are designed by and for the community they serve, our donors can be sure their investment is providing the support and resources our most vulnerable neighbours need on their individual journeys to well-being.

Some of our grants have included support for organizations such as:

DTES Neighbourhood

The Downtown Eastside Neighbourhood House provides a wide variety of important educational, leadership, social and recreational opportunities. With many residents in the local community struggling with nutritional vulnerability, food-centred programs such as morning oatmeal, weekly lunches and Smoothie Tuesdays are increasingly popular. To accommodate their growing needs, their current location will be renovated and upgraded. To assist with the transition period, the Central City Foundation provided a \$30,000 grant to upgrade their swing space, allowing these essential food programs to continue during the renovation.

Urban Native Youth Association

Our commitment to Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation is not just a statement; it's a promise backed by action. For more than two decades, we've been honoured to walk alongside the Urban Native Youth Association, supporting their work to empower Indigenous youth and create brighter futures grounded in culture, connection and

community leadership. This year, we deepened that commitment with a new three-year grant that will fund a Community Impact and Engagement Fellowship at UNYA. This role is designed to build internal capacity and help shape the organization's future in meaningful, sustainable ways. The Fellow will also receive training through The New School of Fundraising, an Indigenous-owned and led fundraising school (and also a partner of Central City Foundation). These experiences will not only strengthen UNYA's internal systems but also nurture the next generation of Indigenous fundraisers and leaders in the non-profit sector.

Dugout Drop-in Centre Society

Central City Foundation provides an annual grant to The Dugout in support of their community living room, which is a crucial place for many folks to break the isolation of life in the inner city. The Dugout employs members of the Downtown Eastside community and mobilizes volunteers from across our city, including 20–25 volunteer drivers who pick up donated food from various grocery stores. The Dugout is committed to finding ways to offer food, support and friendship each day.



UNYA Fellow,
Petr J.

SOCIAL PURPOSE REAL ESTATE

What is social purpose real estate, and why is it an important part of our work?

Social Purpose Real Estate (or SPRE) refers to a property owned, leased or developed specifically to support the needs of the community. Providing secure tenure and deeply subsidized rentals to non-profit organizations helps them put their financial resources into programming that supports people on their journeys to well-being.

Central City Foundation is a founding force in Canada's Social Purpose Real Estate movement. A recent independent evaluation concluded that for every \$1 we invest in our SPRE properties, an impressive \$3.90 is generated in social benefit. Our investments in properties offer more than just the programming within them; they create a foundation for community, stability and a place where change happens. Critical infrastructure for our community partners supports our inner city's most vulnerable populations, including those living in extreme poverty, Indigenous peoples, women, children and youth. Our properties allow community organizations to offer essential services like housing, mental and physical health supports, addiction recovery, employment training and more.

We made our first investment in SPRE in 1910, building the Central City Mission shelter and support centre at 233 Abbott St. in Vancouver, and we've been providing safe, affordable housing ever since. Most recently, through the Central City Housing Society, we have been building connections and community for our tenants and program participants at our two buildings, the Abbott and the Cosmopolitan.

Today, through valued partnerships with organizations like Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society, Aunt Leah's Place, and Vancouver



Women's Health Collective, Central City Foundation's SPRE portfolio also includes a property with services for Indigenous children and families, a health collective for women, a place which houses young women and their children, along with providing support services for youth in foster care.

We are also very excited about the soon-to-be-reopened youth healing centre, n̓aysnúlax̓w, a project developed in partnership with the Okanagan Nation Alliance. This critically needed resource for youth and families in British Columbia will combine best practices in trauma-informed healing with Indigenous cultural and land-based programming to create a unique opportunity for young people to embark on a journey to wellbeing.

By using social purpose real estate as part of our commitment to driving social change, we continue to play a pivotal role in transforming the landscape of our communities. We are helping to build a future where every individual has the opportunity to not only improve their lives but thrive.



**CENTRAL CITY
FOUNDATION'S
HOPE
DIALOGUE**

Listen to Hope Dialogue radio Mondays at noon or wherever you get your podcasts.

Created in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, Hope Dialogue is a weekly one-hour exploration of the topics, issues and complex circumstances challenging low-income neighbourhoods. Our focus is on listening to the voices of people who live and work in these communities, with the belief that conversations like these are how we can begin to make better progress toward solving some of our biggest social problems. Hope Dialogue airs every Monday at noon on CFRO, 100.5 FM, in Vancouver. And it's also available wherever you get your podcasts.



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FOUNDATION**

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centralcityfoundation.ca

On the traditional and unceded ancestral homelands of the
xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Stó:lō
and Səlilwətaʔ / Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.