CENTRAL CITY FOUNDATION



Profiles in Community Leadership

VAHS's Carrie Humchitt

FALL 2026

A SAFE PLACE TO COME HOME.

A PLACE TO BELONG.

A COMMUNITY THAT DOESN'T GIVE UP ON ITS NEIGHBOURS.

Give monthly. Change what's possible for your neighbours tomorrow. Your gift will ensure the possibilities become someone's reality. Across Vancouver's inner city, people alongside community organizations are creating that future every day. Your monthly gift gives them steady support to keep going.

MONTH AFTER MONTH, YOUR GIFT WILL HELP CREATE:

MORE BELONGING

Places where people feel connected, welcomed and part of their community

MORE OPPORTUNITY

Support to build stability, discover new possibilities and move forward

MORE WELL-BEING

Safe housing, food, culture, connection and community supports that help people thrive.

A monthly gift is more than a donation on repeat. It is a commitment to stay with the work, through the challenges, the progress and the possibilities ahead. For 119 years, Central City Foundation has invested in people, ideas and organizations creating change in Vancouver's inner city.

Join us by making a monthly gift today via the QR code. You can also contact us at 604-683-2263 or centralcityfoundation.ca/giving

CEO UPDATE



It is a tremendous honour to mark my twentieth year as President & CEO of Central City Foundation.

Later this fall, we will release a report that includes a new vision for a community of connection and belonging here in Vancouver's inner city. The current situation in our Downtown Eastside community and in inner cities across our province—arguably the worst conditions ever for low-income people living here—is generally considered either a complete policy failure or the result of many policy failures over many years imposed on the people in this community. Or, it is a reflection of what our colleague Norm Leech, Executive Director at Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House, has called the "diabolically brilliant system of oppression" known as colonialism, and it is working exactly as intended.

In either case, we agree that change is needed and it will require us to start from a different place and begin by centring the experience of the folks who live and work here. Because place matters. The land matters, and understanding the intrinsic value of the people of this place may help us all to envision a different future. At Central City Foundation, we believe it is entirely possible to imagine a community of connection and belonging for everyone in our community. And we are convinced that together we can build this future where everyone has the opportunity to overcome injustice, participate and thrive.

Over the past year, we embarked on a learning journey and have engaged folks from across our city and deep within our community to help create this new vision. In the fall of last year, we hosted an Indigenous-led Design Charette and Workshop Series that brought together folks from our community, government, the non-profit and private sectors to learn from Indigenous leaders and reimagine our community's future. We led a local listening project in the spring, gathering almost 200 micro-stories of connection and disconnection from folks in the DTES. We also led a city-wide community engagement survey and, with support from UBC Learning Exchange, undertook an extensive literature review to ensure we considered the many plans and strategies developed over the years to effect change in our community. All of this will inform our upcoming Community Report.

For the past couple of decades, as we've been building relationships and charting our path to Truth, Justice & Reconciliation, we've come to understand that in addition to stopping the harm, we also need to work to restore balance, heal our community and heal from this land. We continue to flow resources to our many partners who are improving our community and mobilizing Indigenous knowledge systems.

So, I invite you to engage with curiosity and an open heart in what we call "radical listening" to identify and understand the possibilities for transformation in ourselves and in our community.

Jennifer Johnstone,
President & CEO, Central City Foundation



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 profiled leader to share their thoughts on leadership, community, and hope for a brighter future. To read more of these in-depth interviews, visit centralcityfoundation.ca.





GINGER GOSNELL-MYERS & CORY DOUGLAS

Indigenous Urban Planners

We are thrilled to celebrate the work being done by Ginger and Cory. Through their shared leadership in Indigenous-led planning, design and community engagement, they have consistently demonstrated the importance of embedding Indigenous history, knowledge, culture and values into the development of our communities. Their work challenges conventional approaches to city-building by ensuring Indigenous voices, histories and ways are foundational to how communities are imagined, designed and built. Through projects like the Cultural Ribbon initiative and their leadership in Central City Foundation's Indigenous-led workshop series and Design Charrette, they have helped create meaningful spaces for learning, dialogue and co-creation. Their work continues to demonstrate what is possible when community development is grounded in relationship, cultural understanding and the principles of reconciliation.

"We need clearer policy around Indigenous involvement in planning and development, and incentives that give developers a reason to invest in doing this work well. We also need clearer relationships between Indigenous professionals working within municipalities and First Nations, and those of us working with developers and project teams. Those roles should be complementary rather than competitive."

— Ginger Gosnell-Myers

CARRIE HUMCHITT

Executive Director, Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society

Carrie has dedicated her life to the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. Through Carrie's leadership of Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society, she continues to provide trauma-informed care and services rooted in dignity, connection, belonging and Indigenous ways of healing. We are excited to see the opening of the new Indigenous Healing Centre this year, a vision more than 20 years in the making. After more than two decades of partnership, including Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society's long-standing home at the Phil Bouvier Family Centre, Central City Foundation is pleased to be a partner in this transformative new space, and we know it will bring meaningful change to the people who live in the Downtown Eastside for generations to come.

"We can achieve more by paddling together, towards a better quality of life for our peoples, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, in the DTES and beyond. Change comes when a community of caring peoples and organizations work together for a common cause. It always has."

— Carrie Humchitt





CAROLYN TUCKWELL

President & CEO, BGC South Coast BC

As President & CEO of BGC South Coast BC for more than 20 years, Carolyn has helped make a difference in the lives of countless children, youth and families. Time and again, her work has shown the importance of creating safe, inclusive spaces where young people can develop relationships, build their life skills and feel connection and a sense of belonging. Through her leadership, BGC South Coast BC continues to evolve and ensures young people facing barriers have access to support, mentorship and community when they need it most. Carolyn's leadership has also helped advance innovative, youth-centred approaches and advocacy that recognize the importance of accessible, no-barrier programs.

"Belonging and acceptance are foundational to everything we do at BGC. Our core belief is that EVERY KID IS AMAZING! This not only guides our work, attention and focus, but is intended to be the key message and experience for every child or youth who becomes a member. There's no "might be, could be, would be if only…" Each individual is unique, and we're here to be alongside them (and their family) to offer a safe, supportive environment and opportunities for each of them based on who they are, their needs and their aspirations. Acceptance and belonging are what BGC is all about."

— Carolyn Tuckwell



SPENCERCREO FOUNDATION

Tara Taylor, Executive Director and the SpencerCreo Foundation team

With the leadership of Executive Director Tara Taylor, SpencerCreo Foundation has demonstrated a deep commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for people with lived and living experience. A small family foundation based in Vancouver, SpencerCreo focuses on a community-rooted, people-first program that provides consistent, wraparound care to individuals experiencing challenges with employment, housing instability, mental health, and/or substance use. Dedicated frontline team members build long-term relationships that are grounded in compassion and consistency to help individuals navigate complex systems, build stability, and take steps toward the futures they envision for themselves. A champion of grassroots change, SpencerCreo Foundation's efforts to provide mentorship, capacity-building and inclusive employment strategies have contributed significantly to connection and belonging in Vancouver's DTES.

"Belonging is huge. I think we sometimes underestimate how powerful it is to have somewhere you know you're welcome. Somewhere people know your name. Somewhere your absence is noticed. A lot of people I work with have experienced rejection from institutions, workplaces, family systems or services. When that happens repeatedly, you learn quickly to protect yourself. I've watched employment change people's sense of themselves. Somebody goes from being identified everywhere as a client, patient, resident or person who needs help to being a coworker. Somebody calls because they need their expertise. People are depending on them. They're earning money. They're contributing. That changes things."

— Tara Taylor

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 recent grants have included support for organizations such as:

Sole Food Street Farms
Sole Food Street Farms is a social enterprise urban farm in the heart of Vancouver that empowers individuals by providing low-barrier agricultural employment, training and inclusion in a supportive community. In 2026, Central City Foundation provided a grant to Soul Food Street Farms to help fund an Indigenous garden project called Stl'a7áshen pen'emay, which means Feast Garden in the Squamish language. The project revitalizes several planting beds with native, food-bearing and pollinator-friendly species and Sole Foods is now working to establish programs that provide urban Indigenous youth with a hands-on gardening experience, connecting them with Indigenous food and plant knowledge.

Binners' Project
Binners' Project is a group of waste-pickers aided by support staff dedicated to improving their economic opportunities, and reducing the stigma they face as informal recyclable collectors. Our grant will help launch the Universal Cart Initiative. Modelled after a bike-sharing system, this program is designed to provide Binners with legal, accessible and purpose-built carts to support their valuable work across the city.



Battered Women's Support Services (BWSS)
Funding for BWSS supported efforts to mobilize front-line anti-violence groups in BC, ensuring the voices of survivors are front and centre to make change at a systemic level. A two-day gathering drawing more than 100 participants from 16 regions across BC, government officials as well as ministerial staff, to influence the provincial implementation of the second phase of the National Action Plan to end gender-based violence included plans to continue building the network and a shared agenda for gender equity.

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 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 and family healing centre, nʔaysnúlaʔxʷ, 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. Central City Foundation began the work to build and sustain a healing place for young people in British Columbia for more than 25 years. With the support of our generous donors, we were able to custom-build the beautiful facilities located on our site we know as 'The Crossing at Keremeos'. These lands, traditionally part the Syilx Nation and the Lower Similkameen Indian Band, were also the location for the first Outward Bound facility in Canada – continuing a history of healing and wellbeing for young people that reaches back through time. From 2009 until 2020, Central City Foundation partnered with the Provincial Health Services Association to contract community organizations such as Portage and the Pacific Community Resource Society, to offer unique long-term live-in programs for young people across BC. Despite the tremendous success of these programs, PHSA chose to close the facility twice. Since 2020 we have been working with ONA to find a long-term sustainable solution that will provide care and support for young people and their families. nʔaysnúlaʔxʷ will open as a culturally grounded, trauma-informed youth and family wellness centre. Guided by Syilx values and community wisdom, the centre will provide a place of healing, connection, learning, and belonging for generations to come. The vision for nʔaysnúlaʔxʷ extends beyond opening a wellness centre. It is about creating a lasting legacy where culture, language, land-based healing, and strong family connections continue to support the wellbeing of future generations. Through ongoing learning, community leadership, and cultural revitalization, nʔaysnúlaʔxʷ will remain a place where Syilx people can reconnect, heal, and thrive. As the centre grows, it will also create opportunities to share the healing power of nʔaysnúlaʔxʷ with Indigenous youth, families, and communities from across British Columbia and beyond. Guided by the principle of "no empty beds," the centre aspires to extend healing, connection, and belonging to those who can benefit from its programs while remaining firmly rooted in Syilx values and community priorities.

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.

CENTRAL CITY FOUNDATION

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centralcityfoundation.ca

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