

THE POWER OF PRESENCE

Our goal for this year is to go deeper in our relationships with our core community members—those individuals and family units in our key programs, many of whom we've walked with for years. True transformation always comes through long-term, committed relationships; this is the heart of Inner Hope.

We've seen the lasting impact of frequent, intentional contact in our community. There are times when some individuals withdraw from community and systems of support for various reasons. As we continue to reach out, our youth and families know that we will be there for them when they hit a crisis or need support.



Staying healthy: Boundless youth, a mentor, and coordinator Mark celebrating after they completed a "virtual" half marathon

COMMUNITY DURING COVID

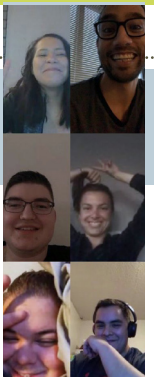
We are thankful that there have been no cases of COVID-19 in our community. Due to the ongoing social restrictions and cancelled supports, our community is facing substantial challenges. Inner Hope's relational approach to ministry has enabled us to quickly adapt our networks of support.

We've been focusing on individualized care over the past few months. 9 households received grocery deliveries, and 7 individuals received "surprises" like flowers, treats, and even a pizza party for one young man who completed a Bible school program!

Before the introduction of government rent relief, one of our young women was struggling to pay rent and facing eviction. We reached out to the Tenth Church community, who generously covered the cost of a month's rent and some household basics for her.

Almost all of our mentors were able to support their youth virtually during lockdown. 9 mentors found super creative ways to connect. They went for distanced walks and bike rides, delivered flowers and books—one even delivered a guitar to his youth so they could learn together online.

Since the young adults can't meet in person, they've been connecting more often online



These are new waters for everyone to navigate, and we've been spending extra time on the phone with our community members to check in on their wellbeing. We contacted the parents of 12 Boundless youth to offer support and coaching on ways to cope and stay healthy during the lockdown.

"HOUSE" SCHOOL



As the last 3 months of school went virtual during the COVID shutdown, many of our students struggled to keep up with their studies. Some of them don't have access to a quiet space, good internet, or adult supervision, all of which are crucial for academic success. We opened up our office to four students during the shutdown to provide a safe, structured learning environment and support from our staff. The students also had daily meals provided—crucial for a long day studying.

Two of our students used their study breaks to improve their piano playing with encouragement and coaching from the staff. We loved hearing their progress!

"What I liked about doing online school at the house was getting help with my school work. If I didn't understand what the teacher was saying, one of the staff members was there to explain it. I also liked the breakfasts and lunches that people made for us!"
-Howie, Boundless youth

A big thank you to members of Trinity Baptist Church, Willingdon Church, Peace Church, and the other individuals who prepared and delivered the food!

Inner Hope Youth Ministries' mission is to walk alongside youth and families in East Vancouver nurturing hope, belonging and transformation through support, discipleship, life skills, and housing.

- support promoting positive community engagement and loving youth, young adults and families in practical ways
- discipleship guiding children, youth and youth adults in a relationship with their Creator
- life skills mentoring youth and young adults to develop the skills needed to build their futures
- housing offering a safe, stable and supportive home for youth, young adults and their children

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THE SUMMER AHEAD



Given the cancellation of overnight camps, our programming team has been busy planning new ways to engage youth and do discipleship this summer. We'll be holding regular campfire and worship nights, and small group camping trips that fit within COVID restrictions.

One of our youth was supposed to spend the summer working at Camp Qwanooes. We've invited him to co-lead some of our summer discipleship

activities. Because of his shared background with many of the youth, he can speak into their lives in a unique way.



SHEDDING LIGHT ON SYSTEMIC RACISM

[adapted from Jenny's Facebook post]

"In over 26 years working as a youth worker, teacher, non-profit director and caregiver, I've had many experiences that have shown me that racism is systemic here in Canada. I'll share a few of those experiences, which are truly the tip of the iceberg.

I once accompanied one of the girls and her mom to register her for grade 12 at a local high school. The VP told us that she didn't think the girl would succeed in her school and should enroll in an alternative program (even though she had overall decent grades). The girl insisted that she wanted a good education and to go to college. The VP said she would start her on probation and watch her closely for the first three months, and would move her to an alternative program if there were any issues. I returned the next day to speak to the VP, reminding her that her job was to believe in her students, and that the school district had committed to increasing the graduation rates and academic success of Indigenous students. That student graduated and went on to university.

"Being First Nations you usually get ridiculed, stereotyped...I would wish that everybody in the world would realize that we have enough resources to make everybody equal. And share it rather than hold on to it."
~Community member

One day, one of the young men asked me if I could go to Children's Hospital with him. His child had dislocated their arm for the second time. The first time, hospital staff had questioned him under the assumption he had abused his child. When it happened a second time, he feared his child might be taken away. I went with him and no staff questioned him about abuse.

One of the Inner Hope boys was walking down the street with a friend. He had recently broken his collarbone and his arm was in a sling. Two police officers, without any dialogue or questioning, jumped him from behind. Even though he was wearing a sling and obviously injured, they were rough and

twisted his arm behind his back. They took him into custody overnight without giving him a reason why. They finally told him that he fit the description of a car thief in the area and they had to check him out. His collarbone didn't heal correctly afterwards.

The fact that many Indigenous individuals must navigate these obstacles to receive quality health care, access to education and appropriate services from police is absolutely heart-wrenching. In Luke 4:18 Jesus says, "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free." This is the first time in my memory that people are engaging on a large scale with the problem of racial injustice in Canada. I don't always know how to be the best advocate, but I do know that we have the opportunity to make change, both personally and within the social structures in our country. I have a long way to go, and I'd love to walk that journey with you beside me."

- Jenny Shantz, Executive Director



WE'RE GEARING UP FOR OUR 4TH RIDE FOR REFUGE ON OCTOBER 3RD! THERE ARE LOTS OF CHANGES THIS YEAR, INCLUDING NEW "FREESTYLE" OPTIONS. HEAD TO THE INNER HOPE WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE, SIGN UP, OR DONATE!

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