

OUR RESILIENCE



2020/21

ANNUAL REPORT



ALBERNI
COMMUNITY
& WOMEN'S
SERVICES
SOCIETY

Our 2020/21 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Throughout these pages you will see representations of resilience. This has been a theme for staff and clients alike.



Dandelions: Resilient Plants

Dandelions grow under the most challenging of circumstances, often making their home in extremely unlikely locations such as concrete cracks. Then, just as their vibrancy begins to fade, the white puffy seedlings are carried along by the breeze, eventually landing, swelling and creating another generation of dandelions.



We would like to acknowledge that we are on Tseshah First Nation and Hupačasath First Nation Unceded Territories and would like to give recognition to the Tseshah and Hupačasath Peoples Past, Present and Future.



OUR VISION

We will have a safe, secure, and nurturing community that is free from violence and abuse.

OUR MISSION

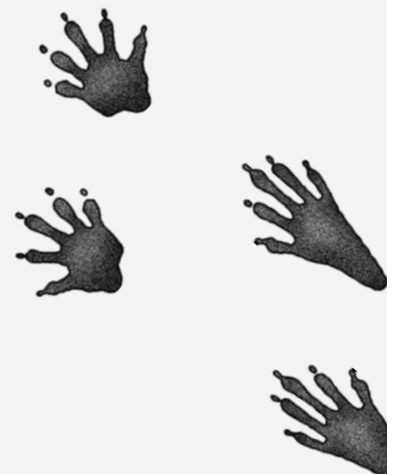
We are committed to building a healthy community for those impacted by violence and abuse.

OUR PURPOSE

- To promote the equal status of women and educate the community on women's issues.
- To provide an emergency shelter for women and their children.
- To provide counselling, outreach, victim services and other supports to women, children, youth, men, and families.
- To develop and provide new programs and services for women, children, youth, men, and families to help build a healthy and safe community. These services could include housing for adults, and/or counselling, outreach, education and other supports and services for women, children, youth, men and families.

The Resilient Raccoon

Raccoons will den in tree cavities, as well as in abandoned animal burrows, brush piles, even chimneys — anywhere that's protected from the weather. All of these abilities make the raccoon a resilient and highly adaptable animal, able to live most anywhere.





On behalf of the Board of Directors, we present to you the annual report for our fiscal year from April 1, 2020 to March 31, 2021 from Alberni Community & Women's Services Society (ACAWS).

For over forty years, ACAWS has worked to provide housing, support services, assistance and referrals to those fleeing from domestic violence or abuse.

It has been a challenging past year for our staff, programs, volunteers and clients.

As many of you may be aware, under the stress of COVID, rates of domestic violence have increased. Everyone at ACAWS has worked so hard to meet this urgency, and staff are continuously working to adapt to changing needs and circumstances.

Despite these hard times, we found new ways of coping and modified our drop-in center and operations to safely serve our clients under COVID restrictions and guidelines.

Throughout the holidays we still were able to distribute enough gift cards from numerous community businesses and individuals to fulfil our client holiday wish lists. We supported 30 individuals and 16 families thanks to their generosity. In addition, and with thanks to the Beaver Creek Fire Department we were able to give out food, gift cards and toys in January to help people through a traditionally difficult month. BIG thank you to all who participated!

Also worth noting, our annual Coldest Night of the Year Walk (CNOY) was held on February 20, 2021 and was virtual. Walkers collected pledges and raised a whopping \$34,568! Special thanks to all those who participated, including our sponsors; The Coulson Group of Companies, Valley Vision Optometry, Alberni District Co-op, The Peak, Island Radio, Alberni Valley News, Suzanne Dube— Edward Jones Financial Advisor and Tim Hortons Port Alberni.

COVID has thrown us many curve balls this year. It has been hard. However, with the support from our community and caring supporters, we have been able to continue to serve those most impacted by this pandemic.

Thank you. Thank you also to all of the staff and volunteers for their patience, hard work and dedication to this important cause.

LESLEY FOX
Chairperson of the Board



ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS

Purple ribbons mark rise in domestic violence in Port Alberni

This year, there are more than 360 ribbons on the tree

ELENA RARDON / Dec. 8, 2020 5:45 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



Hundreds of purple ribbons adorn the tree outside of Alberni Community and Women's Services Society (ACAWS) in Uptown Port Alberni, marking a rise in domestic violence since the COVID-19 pandemic began earlier this year.

The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence is a global campaign that starts on Nov. 25 (International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women) and ends Dec. 10 (World Human Rights Day). Each year, ACAWS marks the occasion by putting up purple ribbons. Each ribbon represents a reported incident of violence against youth or women in the Alberni Valley over the past year.

This year, there are more than 360 ribbons on the tree.

The Resilience of the Crow

Crows have adapted to life in a human-dominated world in several ways. Although several species have been known to use tools, crows are the only non-primate animals known to make new tools and they also possess the ability to solve problems. They can also plan for the future and remember faces.



A message from **OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Creating Support & Connection Amidst Uncertainty & Isolation

As I'm sure many of you can relate to, COVID-19 brought many changes to our organization - some good, some challenging. Few things were highlighted more throughout this past year than interconnection and the need to shift when something is broken. We were shown on a global scale that it is in the interconnectedness of people, of issues, and of support systems that we may find not only the source of our struggles, but also the solutions.

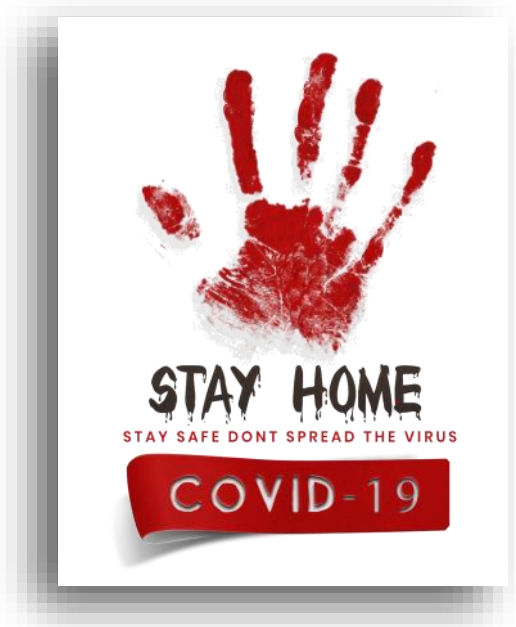
While we, and so many in our community, worked to find meaning in our new and radically altered lives, we are grateful at least that our provincial funding prevailed and allowed us to continue our important work. Late in 2020, we were pleased to add a new Sexual Assault Response program to our services through funding from EVA BC.

Cut off from family members friends and community supports?
Prevented from attending work? Limited to one's home? These aren't only a list of COVID-19 safety measures – they are a glimpse into life with an abusive partner.

"Stay Home and Stay Safe" was the theme for most of us this year, but for some, staying home has been anything but safe. Around the world, as communities have been on "lockdown," intimate partner violence has been on the rise.

COVID-19 has been particularly concerning for people who are quarantined at home with an abusive partner, since isolation is a tactic that abusers use to control their victims. Necessary COVID-19 safety measures, like stay-at-home orders and social distancing, heightened isolation by removing relatives, neighbors and friends from the survivor's support network. We know that when survivors lack resources, it becomes much more difficult to leave the relationship.

Creating support and connection amidst uncertainty and isolation during the COVID-19 pandemic has required increased awareness and an urgent response. The stress and anxiety associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the isolation that accompanies social distancing, has been triggering and potentially dangerous for survivors.



“ ‘Stay Home and Stay Safe’ was the theme for most of us this year, but for some, staying home has been anything but safe. Around the world, as communities have been on ‘lockdown,’ intimate partner violence has been on the rise. ”

This past year has been about adapting to clients' changing needs and creatively shifting the way we provide services and, advocating for changes in the way systems support survivors to ensure people experiencing intimate partner violence can access the safety they need and deserve.

We never wavered in our ingenuity and commitment and worked harder and smarter to sustain our high-quality services with little-to-no disruption. The resolve and heart of our team members has been inspiring, while the strength and resilience of our clients has been unimaginable.

Staff were compassionate, kind, professional, and dedicated to providing quality service as ACAWS continued to navigate a new way of providing services, that includes in person and virtual counselling. We are optimistic about a model that will allow us to continue to build upon the quality and capacity of our programs as we go forward.

Our Transition house has been a shelter in the storm during COVID-19. Our services for clients in Transition House never stopped—we remained open and continued answering calls 24/7. Interestingly, while we knew domestic violence was on the rise, fewer callers than normal were asking for shelter, rather they were opting for legal protections over congregate living. Those interested in shelter had questions about how we were keeping the house safe, healthy and clean. Our building has always been a safe haven with locked doors and surveillance cameras, but the definition of safety broadened to include safety from an unseen virus in communal living with enhanced cleaning measures as well as masking and social distancing protocols. It has been our intention to keep our front-line staff safe and healthy, while shifting and adding resources for shelter, housing, and crisis response. Disinfecting all surfaces has now become second nature in all areas.

Our Second Stage Housing project is moving forward as rezoning of the property is taking place. Optimistically we could be shovel ready as early as the fall of 2021. The process seems to have been slow, but we look forward to being able to add another 22 units of safe housing for women and their children.

Despite the complexities experienced in these times the ACAWS team has held resolve in its focus and determination to support people in safe, dignified and effective ways through our varied models of service. The acceptance of the "new normal" continues to be demonstrated through our staff's professionalism as they offer quality in-person and virtual services, with increased safety measures at the forefront of everything we do.

Every day the staff at ACAWS rises to this never-ending challenge. It is testament to the expert team at ACAWS that we have not only survived this challenging period but provided more support than ever before. I have a sense of hope that there will be brighter days ahead. I also have a sense of pride in the way our team continues to rise to the task, even as their own lives are challenged.

To everyone who has trusted us with your insights, your experiences, your information, your feedback, and your resources (volunteers, funds, donations, grants) we are honoured to do this work and our commitment is steadfast in continuing to carefully and respectfully serve individuals and families across our region. I am delighted to be part of the team sustaining the good work in place and to working with stakeholders and communities to strengthen understanding of and responses to domestic and family violence.

ELLEN FROOD
Executive Director



OUR TRANSITION HOUSE

For Women and Children

Transition House is core funded for eleven beds by BC Housing. We also gratefully receive donations from service organizations and private citizens.

The Transition House supports women and their children who are At Risk of Violence or have experienced Violence, by providing access to safe, secure and confidential services, including information and supports for decision-making, short-term shelter or housing, referrals to other services and links to affordable housing. All women are eligible for the program services

regardless of ethno-cultural background, religious beliefs, physical ability, health, mental wellness, social context, sexual orientation and/or gender identity.

Women who are referred but do not reside at Transition House are provided initial contact services including an immediate safety assessment, short-term plan for safety, emotional support, and referrals to alternative and appropriate resources.

This year has been quite challenging with the impact of Covid-19. We have had to re-adjust how staff can work with clients during the pandemic safely while maintaining the respect and confidentiality of the client. Staff have continued to work in-person with Transition House clients to give the support and services that we offer normally. Our reduced barriers model we had adapted has been reviewed and somewhat modified due to the pandemic, but we still try to meet with people where they are in life and support them with their personal choices with respect and dignity.

We have received much support and funding from various sources that has enabled us to continue to provide services to woman and children impacted by violence. This ranges from supplies of PPE to the hard-to-find disinfectant and an external housing for individuals with covid related concerns. We have been very grateful for all of this.

We continue to struggle in our community with a lack of affordable housing, which may cause clients to stay longer than 30 days in order to find appropriate housing. Our statistics are slightly lower this year, which is due to Covid-19 and the fact we are a communal living style with lots of shared common spaces.

On a positive note, we have had numerous success stories from this year's clients. Some that come to mind are the young mom who overcame so many challenges to be reunited with her baby; the elderly woman who was able to reclaim her home as hers; the young woman who was able to relocate back east to family for safety. And so many more that Port Alberni Transition House is proud to have been part of their supports in achieving their goals.

A huge thank you to BC Housing who has been very supportive in this time of crisis; and to our front-line support staff who continue to work each day.

CINDY BLAKE
Manager of Transition House



ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS

Port Alberni's Transition House open during COVID-19 pandemic

Domestic violence not going away, says executive director

ELENA RARDON / Apr. 27, 2020 6:00 a.m. / LOCAL NEWS / NEWS



Although family violence calls in Port Alberni have not increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began, Alberni Community and Women's Services Society (ACAWS) is still offering a safe place for women and children who have been affected by domestic abuse.

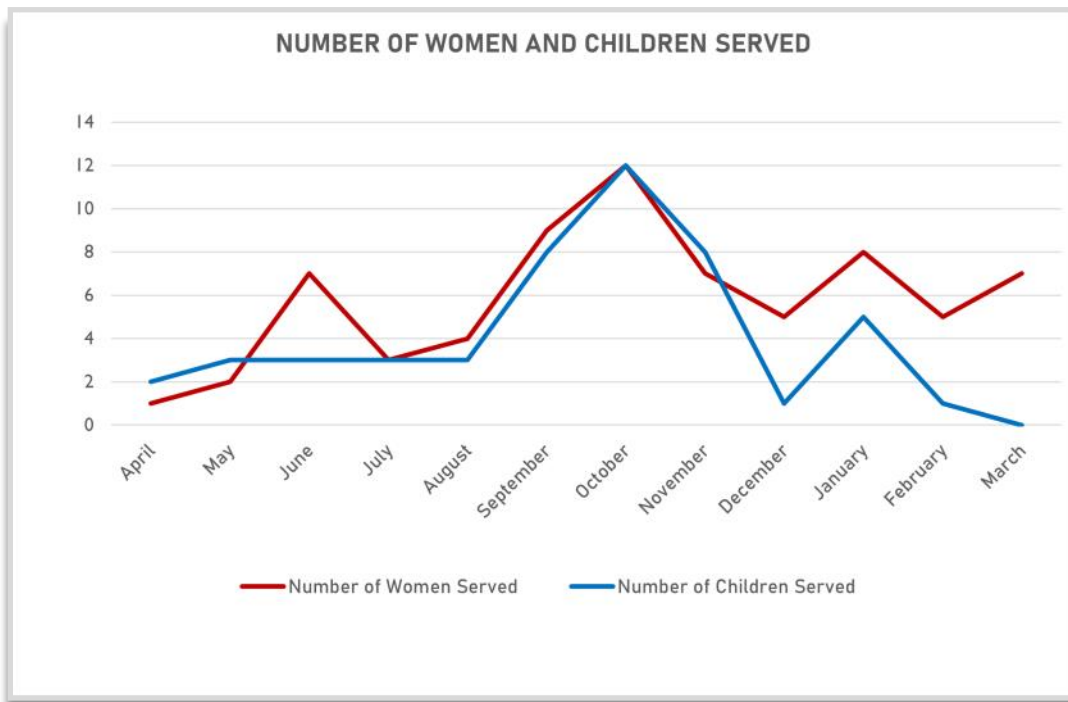
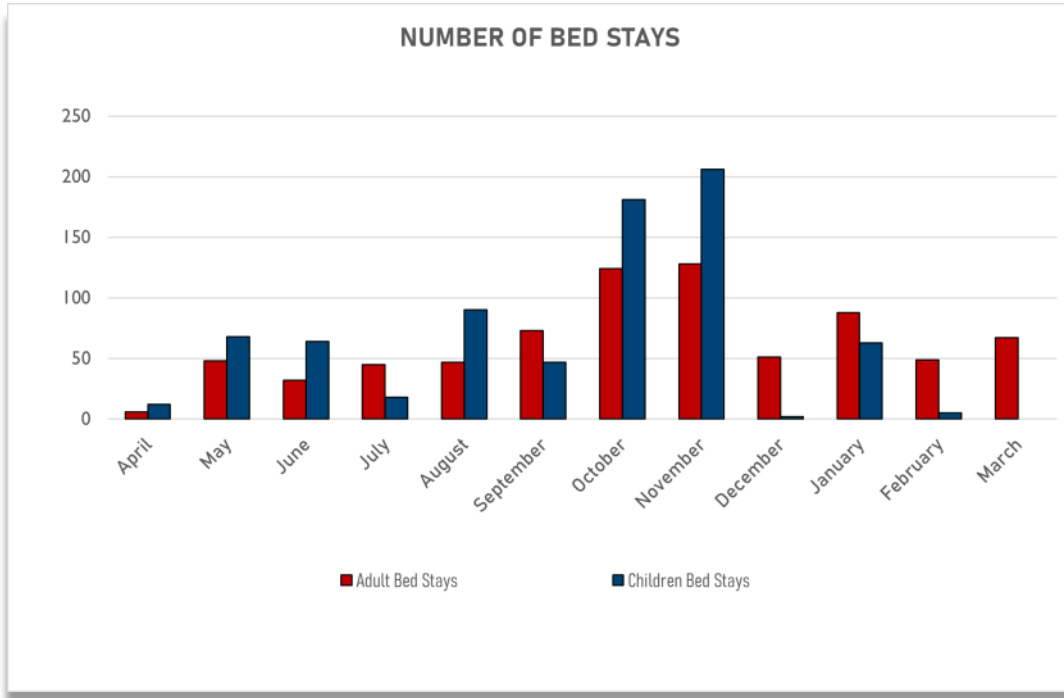
In 2019, the Port Alberni RCMP received 389 calls for family violence throughout the year. According to the RCMP, the number of domestic violence calls in Port Alberni has not increased compared to this time last year, despite social distancing restrictions. But ACAWS executive director Ellen Froot says women in abusive relationships may feel trapped or isolated by the COVID-19 pandemic and might not feel safe reaching out for help.

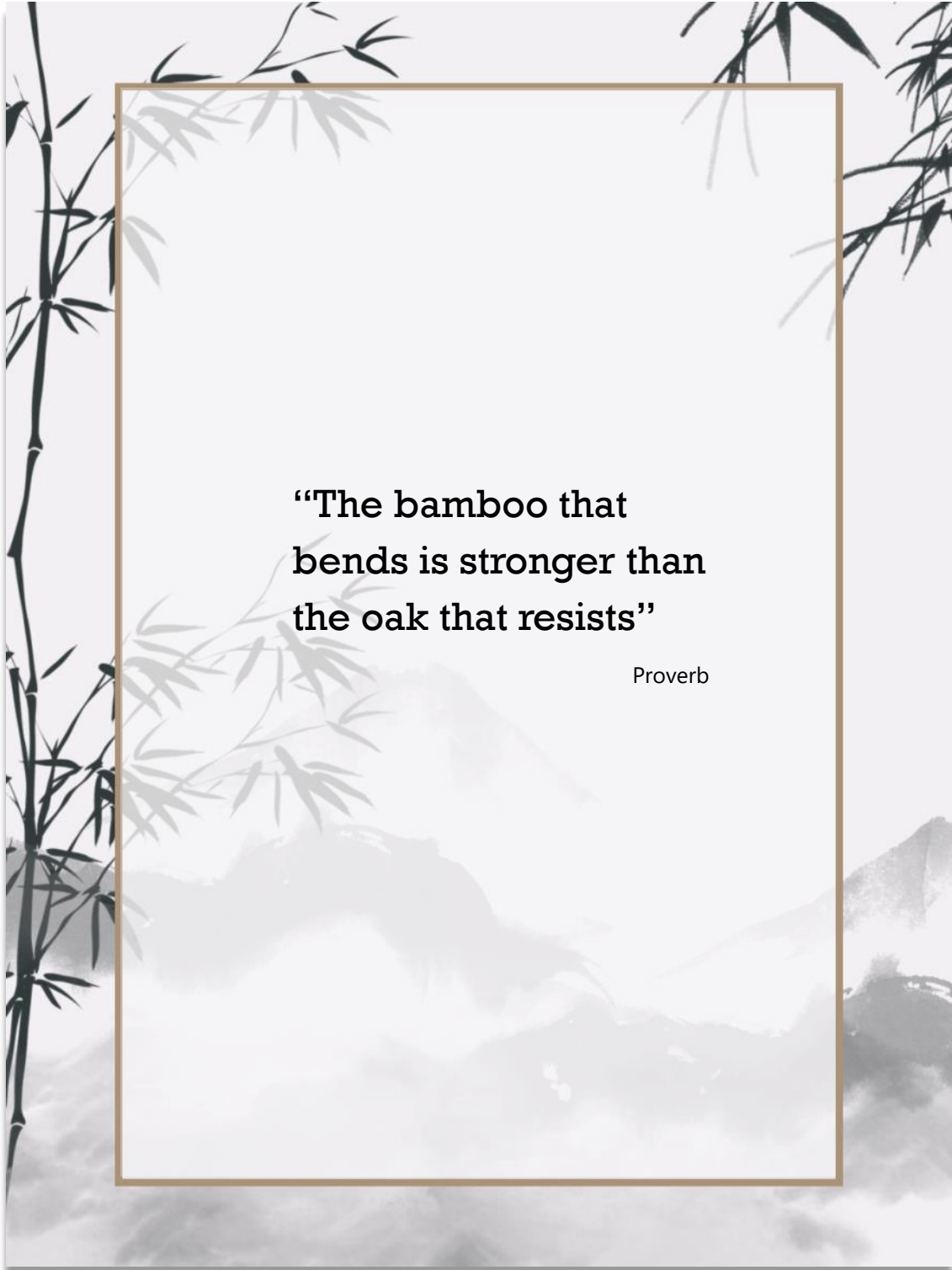
Resilient Like A Fox

Found around the world, red foxes are resilient, resourceful, and intelligent animals with a remarkable ability to adapt to most any environment. In Canada, they live anywhere from rain forests and mountains to suburbs and farms.



OUR TRANSITION HOUSE 2020/21 ANNUAL STATISTICS





**“The bamboo that
bends is stronger than
the oak that resists”**

Proverb



The Tree on Fairy Lake
Port Renfrew, BC

resilience

The capacity to maintain their core purpose and integrity in the face of dramatically changed circumstances.

OUR WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

Stopping the Violence

The Stopping the Violence Counselling Program provides individual and/or group counselling for women who have been impacted by abuse and/or violence in relationships. This includes historical abuse and sexual assault. Provided from a woman-centered, trauma informed, feminist perspective and within an accessible, safe and supportive environment, the STV model offers supportive counselling based on respectful relationships.

We believe women are the experts in their own lives. Program services are delivered in a manner that respects each woman's individual rights, safety and human dignity, regardless of economic status, gender, age, race, cultural or ethnic origins, physical or mental ability or sexuality.

This past year presented some challenges to the STV program because of COVID-19 restrictions. Individual counselling sessions were offered to the women by either video or telephone with sessions by phone being the preference. This presented an additional challenge for the STV counsellor in building trusting relationships and delivering the counselling in a safe, contained manner for clients while at a distance. Because of the restrictions ACAWS was unable to offer an inhouse group program and continuing work is being done to see how this might be done safely online.

At the beginning of this fiscal year the numbers of clients accessing the program was low, again due to COVID and the inability for counsellor and clients to meet in person. However, the program quickly filled to capacity and currently has a waitlist of 22 women waiting to access the program.

325

TELEPHONE COUNSELLING
SESSIONS BOOKED

83

WOMEN REFERRED
TO THE PROGRAM

GAYLE MADDOCKS
STV Counsellor

OUR WOMEN'S PROGRAMS

Sexual Assault Response Program (SARP)

With the funding and continuous support of EVA BC, I was and am still honoured to have been chosen to be the facilitator for the new Emergency Sexual Assault Response Program (SARP), here at ACAWS. Since the beginning of this year, I have stayed busy by getting to know my new colleagues, learning alongside of them, and participating in ACAWS fundraising events. I've attended countless seminars and training programs, including one of EVA BC's annual conferences.

Clinical Counselor for Port Alberni Family Guidance, Jennifer Minard, had the impressive task of writing both a facilitator and participant training manual for this program and I am incredibly thankful for her work towards it. With her contribution, I was able to add some of my own teachings and create an interactive and inclusive, trauma-informed training program for volunteers. With 14 volunteers registered, training is commencing the first week of May through online learning platforms. Simultaneously, I will have two North Island College students enrolled in the Human Service Worker Certificate program as practicum placements. Due to COVID-19, these placements will be project-based and I look forward to their fresh ideas, advocacy, and contributions to this program.

Trained volunteers for SARP will work on an on-call basis and may be involved in advocacy roles, event planning, and community education programs. They will gain a feminist and trauma-informed perspective on sexual assault in Canada, as well as learn client-centered communication and active listening skills. Volunteers will gain a better understanding of the legal and ethical aspects of sexual assault and importantly, analyze the meaning of self-care and create professional self-care plans that will be beneficial to them throughout their careers as support volunteers.

For the month of April '21, I took on the task of creating an educational window display to bring community awareness to sexual assault. The theme for this display was "Letters to Survivors" and we asked community members to drop-off letters, posters, or cards of support and encouragement, to be displayed to the public. We also used this to bring awareness to provincial statistics, to promote the other services ACAWS offers, and to educate the public on reporting options.




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I look forward to the future of this program without the limitations of COVID-19. Ideally, this program would be facilitated in-person where team-like relationships could be made with myself and volunteers. I am impressed with the continuous resiliency that mental health support providers display and the new technological tools I have learned to assist in interactive learning plans but in-person training is invaluable. My hope for this program is to see it facilitated for first responders, mental health care, and health care providers throughout the community. I am appreciative of the flexibility and control I have been given when it comes to customizing this program and it is because of this flexibility and control that this program can offer not only emotional support during a time of crisis but overall advocacy for survivors of sexual assault and education to the public. I look forward to learning more from my colleagues and seeing how far I can take this program that is so beneficial to the city of Port Alberni.

CELINE SAUVE
Program Coordinator










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ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS

Alberni region gets new sexual assault response program

ACAWS to benefit from \$10M Ending Violence Association of BC grant program

[ELENA RARDON](#) / Dec. 22, 2020 5:45 a.m. / [LOCAL NEWS](#) / [NEWS](#)

The Alberni Valley will be getting a new emergency sexual assault response team.

Alberni Community and Women's Services Society (ACAWS) is one of 23 organizations across B.C. that has received a grant to support the delivery of coordinated emergency sexual assault response services. The Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC) announced earlier in December that it is administering a three-year, \$10-million Emergency Sexual Assault Services grant program.

Ellen Froid, ACAWS' executive director, said they have received funding for approximately two and a half years.

Women & Youth Outreach Programs

2020 has been a year of change, fear, worry, sadness, and seclusion, however 2020 has also been a year of finding strength, witnessing a spark turn into to a flame, discovering new ways to overcome challenges and joining our voices in supporting one another to stand up to inequalities and old ways of thinking. As the world has shifted and we all came to realize just how important our care givers are, we can't help but realize that these are not new struggles to women, but simply new labels placed on old issues. It is the caregivers who stood at the front lines and never backed down in the face of this new challenge, adding more and more to the already heavy weight on their shoulders.

Women are the warriors who never back down. Women always find a bit more to give, of what they have and who they are. Women are survivors of extraordinary circumstances and carriers of hope in the face of adversity. I have had the honour of working closely with so many of our female warriors, who kept going and pressed on as the world crumbled and the pandemic added more and more weight to their already heavy shoulders. I have been witness to women who refused to stay down and give up. I have stood shoulder to shoulder with women in their struggles and have been inspired by their strength and determination.

Outreach is an opportunity to support and walk beside women and children and hold a safe space for them while they seek their next steps. This may look different for each person and the support given is unique to that individual. Each connection made in Outreach is a special relationship that is grown through trust and patience, honesty and a willingness to show vulnerability. Many women and children are facing seemingly insurmountable challenges and roadblocks which inhibit their ability to live freely and as equals in relationships. So many women and children are faced with abuse and neglect, years and lifetimes of terrible treatment from those who should be partners and safe relationships.

This past year I have been witness to some amazing displays of strength. In one particular case I worked with a youth for over a year, who has had multiple challenges with home, school, peers and online bullying. This young woman reached out for help. We have kept in touch on a weekly basis and used virtual methods to stay connected in an environment and time where connection is difficult. Together we tackled some of the issues she was struggling with and I advocated for her when she needed my voice. In the case of other clients, I was able to use my voice to advocate via telephone calls for those who needed support when attending virtual medical appointments etc., and where anxiety and fear is often still very much real.

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In my work with youth, it is in the lives of the youth where I gain my hope and strength to make an important trajectory change now, which will grow with time into a large positive difference for them as they transition into adulthood. In my work with women, I gain perseverance and determination to keep standing up for what is right and knowing my role is to support strong women on an uncertain path, as we push forward together into a hopeful future.

This past year has been a year of so many gifts, so many strength stories and so many woman and youth warriors who I have had the great honour of witnessing.

HARRINA GILLIS
Outreach Worker



2020/21 ADULT AND YOUTH OUTREACH

Women Referred	126
Children Referred	18
Women Referred But Not Served	3
Children Referred But Not Served	4
Women Who Are New Clients	141
Children Who Are New Clients	18
Outreach Services Accessed By Women	269
Outreach Services Accessed By Children	32
Total Outreach Visits By Women	1,072
Total Outreach Visits By Children	43
Total Community Education And Presentation Hours	7
Total Networking / Bridge Building Hours	50
Total Number Of Phone Calls And Text Message	328
Total Drop-in Meetings	30
Total Number Of Client Emails	111

OUR PROGRAMS

FOR CHILDREN & YOUTH

The P.E.A.C.E. Program

The PEACE (Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment) program provides individual and group counselling for children and youth ages 3 – 18 that have experienced violence and abuse in their home.

Our PEACE Program Counsellor uses a psycho-educational approach in their work to achieve the following program goals:

- To support children and youth to feel safe, respected, valued and heard,
- To support mothers/caregivers to feel respected, empowered, confident and effective,
- To support children, youth, and parents to develop healthy and respectful ways of connecting with one another,
- To reduce isolation, and let children and youth know that they are not alone,
- To identify and develop safety skills and strategies,
- To support emotional health and self-esteem,
- To view emotions and responses not as pathological, but rather as a natural response to traumatic events,
- To help children and youth identify and manage their emotions,
- To provide strategies to help children and youth cope with and minimize responses, including healthy ways of expressing anger,
- To foster hope by reminding children and youth of their abilities, and how they have used strategies and resistance in the past to successfully cope with adversity,
- To offer reassurance that the child's and youth's reactions are natural under the circumstances,
- To provide outreach in schools, focused on violence prevention,
- To develop understanding of violence against women and girls.

The 2020/2021 Fiscal year has been a challenging one for everyone, and our Children and Youth PEACE Program is no exception. When the Covid-19 pandemic began just prior to the beginning of this fiscal year, our groups had to be discontinued and individual sessions were cancelled as face-to-face work was not considered safe. School presentations were cancelled due to school closures and staff quickly began to look for alternative ways to deliver the program. Families were challenged to learn new ways to access school classes online as things were systematically shutting down. As a result the numbers of children and youth accessing the program dropped off as families focused on other priorities.

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This year our PEACE Program saw further challenges due to staffing changes as Brenda Wainwright, who was our PEACE Counsellor for many years, moved on to other things. Once a new PEACE Counsellor was hired, time was spent researching and delivering services in an online format. This was successful for those who accessed the program, but also provided further challenges for those families who didn't have the required technology or internet services.

As we go forward, supporting our children, youth and families remains our focus. We continue to be challenged to seek new and innovative ways to provide this very valuable service and new plans are underway for the next fiscal period. How we serve our clients may look different, but we are still here to offer our assistance to ensure the safety and needs of our PEACE Program clients are met.



The Phoenix: A Symbol of Human Resilience

The Phoenix is a mythological bird associated with the sun. It is often said to die in a show of flames before obtaining new life (or being reborn) and rising out of the ashes of its predecessor. It is often used as a symbol of transformation and human resilience.



OUR PROGRAMS FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

Community-Based Victim Services

Community Based Victim Services (CBVS) provides emotional support, practical assistance, general as well as justice-related information to women, men, youth and children in the Alberni Valley and Bamfield who are victims of intimate crimes. Intimate crimes include violence in relationships, adult, child and youth sexual assault, historical sexual abuse and criminal harassment (i.e. threats, stalking).

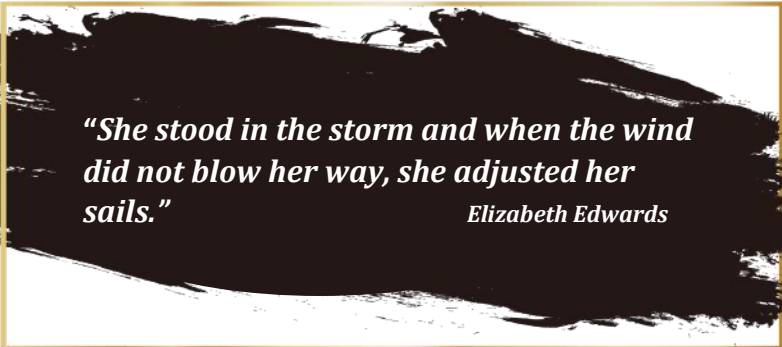
CBVS provides transportation to court and other related meetings and appointments, facilitates court orientations and trial preparation, accompanies victims to interviews with the RCMP and judicial hearings, updates victims of the status of investigations and court proceedings, assists with forms such as Protection orders, Victim Impact statements, Crime Victim Assistance applications and Victim Safety Unit registration, takes 3rd Party reports for sexual assaults, gives out emergency phones, creates safety plans with the client and refers victims to other programs and agencies for continued support.

During 2020-2021, Community Based Victim Services has been flexible with the many changes that came with Covid19. The courts came back in full force in a unique way after continual adjournments. Online meetings have become a new norm: monthly intimate partner violence meetings, weekly case management meetings with coworkers, court user meetings and several training opportunities: Indigenous Cultural Safety Awareness; EVA BC Conference; Intimate Partner Violence and Brain Injury, BCSPCA animal abuse and its connection to intimate partner violence; Supporting Survivors of Sexual Assault; and Public Safety Canada Training Symposium webinars. Community Based Victim Services is now assisting to form the MMIWG working group at the police station.

Of special highlight for the Community Based Victim Services role:

- Nominated for an award through the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General at the annual Community Safety and Crime Prevention Awards
- Facilitated in-person 8 week Rebuilding Lives – Seven Sacred Teachings Program for women hosted at INEO employment through the OWL program
- Provided with emergency phones with sim cards and plans by Telus to be given to those in high-risk or precarious situations.

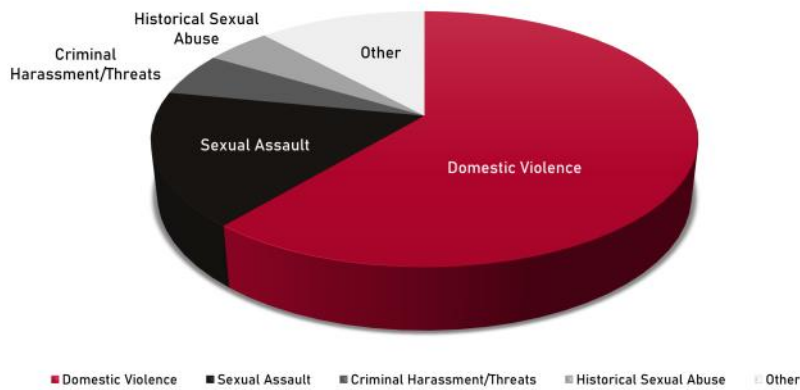
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"She stood in the storm and when the wind did not blow her way, she adjusted her sails."

Elizabeth Edwards

Number of Referrals by Offense Type



From April 2020 to March 2021, there were 265 incidents compared to 268 incidents last reporting year.

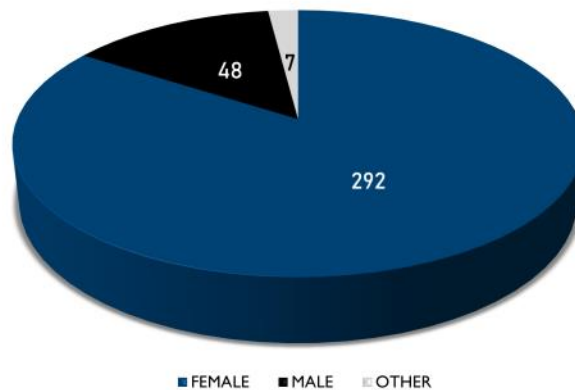
The CBVS program received 347 new client referrals, along with 500 general inquiries or brief service contacts which doubled over last year. The tremendous increase in brief service contacts is mainly due to being available in-person to the community. Of those client referrals, 274 of those resulted in referrals to the CBVS program because of family violence. There were less child clients referred this reporting year.

Bullying and threats increased this past year as did referrals for LGBTQ2S+.

Average ongoing clients this year was 275 persons compared to last year being 194 average ongoing clients, creating a tremendous workload. This could be in part due to the courts being postponed from Covid19, more people considering reporting, higher waitlists for services, and more family challenges. Interestingly though, 368 client services were concluded this year compared to 198 last reporting year.

Historical sexual assault and youth sexual assault files increased over the past year whereas child sexual assaults decreased by 83%.

Number of Clients by Gender



SARAH HENSHALL
Victim Services Worker

Our Resource Center

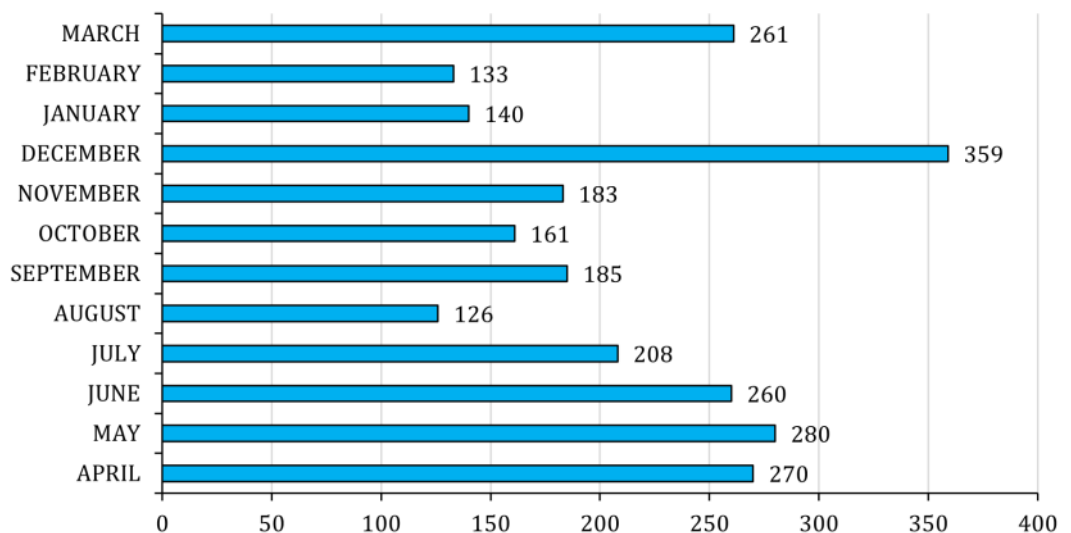
The community resource center works alongside a diverse set of individuals from all different backgrounds. Many people come to the center in times of stress and need immediate assistance. Others come looking for ways to grow stronger and heal. Generally, people come to the resource center looking for support from staff as well as other clients, who challenge and rely on one another. The center also provides people with personal care items as well as harm reduction supplies.

This last year looked very different due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We went from seeing people every day to seeing them virtually or from a distance outside. It has been a very challenging year for everyone, especially the people we work with. We believe it is very important for our clients to stay connected to our services during these unprecedented times, which is why we have worked so hard in creating a safe environment during the pandemic.

This past summer we were able to open our doors for a few months while covid-19 cases on the island were low. With the rise of cases, we resorted to using the plexiglass door frame we had made to ensure safety of our clients and staff.

One way we were able to make a difference in our client's lives is through a rental subsidy program funded by BC Housing. This subsidy provides women fleeing domestic violence with up to \$450 of their rent covered. We were able to provide 4 on-going rent subsidies, and the ability to provide subsidies to cover various moving/rent related costs on a one-time basis. We also received bread and baked goods from Buy-Low Foods, on a weekly basis. This was greatly appreciated by our clients.

NUMBER OF CLIENTS PER MONTH



FRANCES WILSON
Program Coordinator



Alberni sorority raises funds for community organizations

Eta Chi chapter applauded for donations

ALBERNI NEWS STAFF / Nov. 21, 2020 12:00 p.m. / COMMUNITY



The Eta Chi Sorority chapter in Port Alberni recently donated funds to the Ty Watson House, the Salvation Army and Bread of Life, Alberni Community and Women's Services Society and the SPCA.

The chapter donated \$1,840 in total.



Roxy Manson of Port Alberni is collecting socks for the month of November. (ELENA RARDON / ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS)

Port Alberni teen rocks with drive for warm socks

Roxy Manson is collecting socks to donate to people living in the cold

ELENA RARDON / Nov. 18, 2020 6:00 a.m. / COMMUNITY



Bringing hope to Port Alberni with soap

Victoria organization takes hotel recycling to a new level while helping with hygiene

SUSIE QUINN / Mar. 18, 2021 5:45 a.m. / COMMUNITY

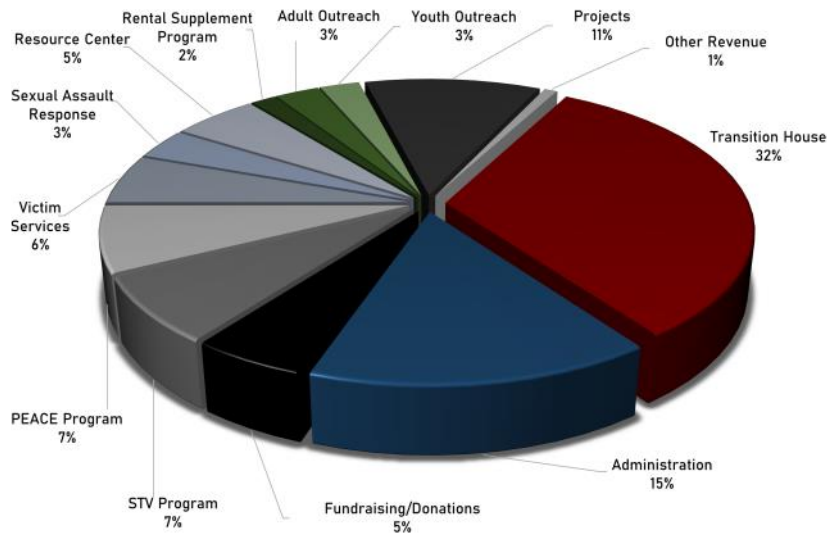


The novel coronavirus pandemic has brought a renewed focus on cleanliness and hygiene. Toilet paper hysteria aside, the pandemic created challenges for low-income people or those experiencing homelessness, who cannot afford to buy more products.

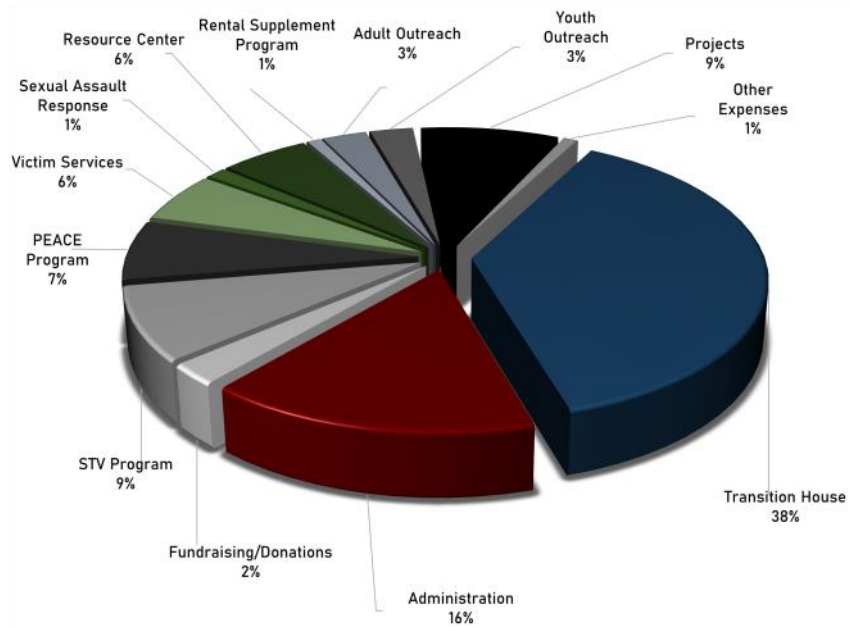
That's where Soap for Hope Canada has stepped in. The Victoria-based organization supplies hygiene products to shelters and other aid organizations in communities across the country, including Port Alberni. It relies on volunteers to help get the product to clients. In Port Alberni, Larry McGifford from the Rotary Club of Port Alberni-Arrowsmith leads the charge.

OUR NUMBERS

2020/21 REVENUE



2020/21 EXPENSE



SUSAN ROTH
 Manager of Finance and Administration



Members of the Port Alberni Toy Run, centre, make much-needed donations to the ADSS Breakfast Club, Eighth Avenue Learning Centre and Alberni Women and Community Services Society (ACAWS). The Toy Run continues to raise money from sales of its teddy bears, available at Day-Low Foods in Port Alberni, and Weavers Leather in Courtenay and Victoria. (SUSAN QUINN Alberni Valley News)

Port Alberni Toy Run teddy bears the gift that keeps on giving

School, outreach programs receive much-needed donations from Toy Run

SUSIE QUINN / Mar. 14, 2021 5:30 a.m. / COMMUNITY



The Port Alberni Toy Run teddy bears are gifts that keep on giving.

Members of the Toy Run executive were at Alberni District Secondary School earlier this month to deliver a handful of cheques to organizations helping students and their families. The ADSS Breakfast Club received \$3,000, while \$1,000 each went to Eighth Avenue Learning Centre and Alberni Community and Women's Services Society (ACAWS), and \$500 to outreach therapy at the Hilton Centre.

OUR FUNDRAISING COLDEST NIGHT OF THE YEAR



Another amazing fundraising year!

We could not have done it without the support of our community Thank you! A special thanks goes out to the members of our fundraising committee (Barbara McLean, Brett Davies, Chris Alemany, Darlene Coulson, Jeff Cook, Lesley Fox, Suzanne Dubé, Tracy Melis, and all the staff who participated). Your ideas and input, and help are greatly appreciated.

Coldest Night of the Year remains our biggest fundraiser. We had to do things differently this year, but you made this happen in spite of the pandemic. Together we raised \$34,568!

Our star fundraiser was Isha Rai who raised \$3,300.13. Isha has been fundraising for us since she was 5. What an inspiration she is!

Several other people reached our \$1000 club. Chris Alemany, Trish Trumper, Deborah Kruks, Sharon Smith, Celine Sauve, Ellen Froot, and Carol Hanson.

We also had some incredible support through our Sponsors – The Coulson Group of Companies, Valley Vision Optometry, Alberni District Co-op, The Peak, Island Radio, Alberni Valley News, Susanne Dubé Edwards Jones Financial advisor, and Stefanie Weber Tim Hortons.

We are grateful to every individual who chose to walk and raise money for ACAWS this year.

We have also raised a significant amount through collecting bottles at the bottle depot. Thank you to Jimmy Kohut, Tracy Melis, and Barbara McLean for picking up bottles and bringing them to the bottle depot. Thanks to everyone who donated empties to ACAWS.

CAROL HANSON
Administrative Assistant

“ *We walk humbly realizing that anyone can lose their footing and then lose everything else.* **”**





Isha Rai, age nine, raised more than \$3,000 for Coldest Night of the Year in Port Alberni. (SUBMITTED PHOTO)

Nine-year-old raises \$3K for Coldest Night of the Year

Port Alberni's Isha Rai was highest-earning participant in annual fundraiser

ALBERNI NEWS STAFF / Feb. 23, 2021 12:00 p.m. / COMMUNITY



A young girl in Port Alberni raised more than \$3,000 for the homeless, hurting and hungry in the community.

Isha Rai, age nine, took part in Coldest Night of the Year on Saturday, Feb. 20 and managed to raise \$3,300.13. Rai's total was the highest raised by an individual walker in Port Alberni this year.



Helma Swinkels, left, from Bibi J's is all smiles as she makes her first donation under the new business name to Elen Froot from Alberni Community and Women's Services (ACAWS). In 18 sales days, Swinkels was able to donate \$3,000 to the transition house. (SUSAN QUINN/ Alberni Valley News)



ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS

Bibi J's in Port Alberni makes first donation to non-profit

Alberni Women and Community Services to benefit

SUSIE QUINN / Jan. 20, 2021 3:00 p.m. / BUSINESS / LOCAL BUSINESS



Just 18 shopping days after opening, Bibi J's has made its first donation to a non-profit organization.

Bibi J's owner Helma Swinkels on Jan. 8 donated \$3,000 to Alberni Community and Women's Services.



ALBERNI VALLEY NEWS

Coldest Night of the Year goes virtual for 2021

Port Alberni organizers urging people to share photos of their walks to create community feel

ELENA RARDON / Jan. 27, 2021 9:00 a.m. / COMMUNITY



Alberni Community and Women's Services Society (ACAWS) is once again raising money for the hungry, homeless and hurting in the community through their annual Coldest Night of the Year fundraiser.

However, the novel coronavirus pandemic means that the 2021 event will look a little different.

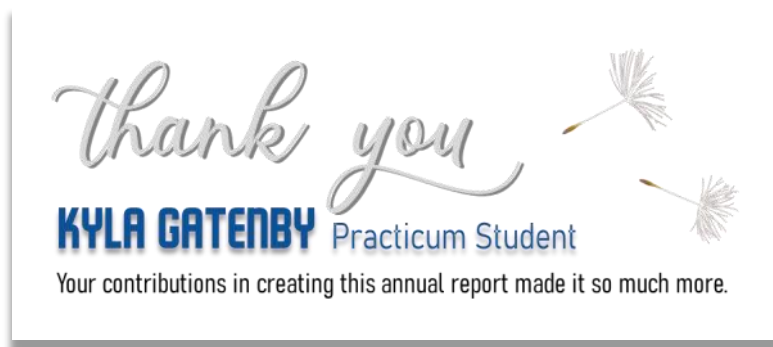
"We're rising to the challenge," explained ACAWS executive director Ellen Frood. "Everything is online this year."

Thank you

We would like to thank all of our donors for their generous support, especially during these times of uncertainty. Because people like you care so deeply about our cause, our organization can continue to work on building a healthy community and improving the status of women by providing a safe place and innovative services for women, children, men, and families. Every donation has a meaningful impact and your contributions have not gone unnoticed. We are thankful for your commitment to all that we do.

During the 2020/21 fiscal year, we received funding for our programs from the following provincial government sources:

- British Columbia Housing Management Commission (BC Housing)
- Ending Violence Association of BC (EVA BC)
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
- Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing: Community Gaming Grants Branch
- Vancouver Island Health Authority: Aboriginal Health



Alberni Community and Women's Services Society

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