

# Understanding the Past, Building Futures



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### **Getting Started**

We are a community agency committed to helping end violence against women, men, children, families, LGBTQ2S+ in the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. In 2022 we changed our name to Sage Haven Society, but we stay the same in our core belief of building safe and healthy communities.

Long recognized as a fishing and logging area, the Alberni district is nestled at the end of the Alberni Inlet and home to the traditional territories of the Nuu-chah-nulth Nations. Our office and transition house are located on the unceded traditional lands of the Tseshaht and Hupacasath people. Although steeped in natural beauty, years of declining fish stocks has resulted in higher than average poverty levels and local communities struggle with homelessness, addictions and escalating crime.

Sage Haven is unflinching in its commitment to build stronger communities and provide services and support to those in need.

### Who We Are

In 1980 under the umbrella of Port Alberni Women's Resource Society, a dedicated group of community members came together to provide services to women and children experiencing domestic abuse. As the Port Alberni area grew, so also did the Society. In 2006 our name was changed to Alberni Community and Women's Services to show our services had expanded to include men. Our name changed again in 2022 to Sage Haven Society. This new name is a reflection of wisdom and knowledge and our roots from the earth and that that we are a haven to all who reach out to us. Sage Haven has a dedicated volunteer board and professional staff. Our programs and services continually evolve and expand to meet community need. Much of the life-changing work that we do incorporates the notion of transitions. Transitions from abusive relationships into the safety of our shelter. Transitions from shelter into independence and economic security. Transitions from the trauma of sexual assault to whole, healed, hopeful futures.

Courageous transitions from fear and isolation to empowerment and hope.

Our committed Board and Staff make a difference! Their commitment to the community and the organization is unparalleled. They provide the backbone and direction for the organization. As well, the Executive Director and staff are engaged day-today in serving the community and enhancing the lives of so many women and children.

Our work is life-changing...

#### **Mission Statement**

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

#### Vision

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

#### Philosophy

- We respect the right of those we work with to make their own choices in all areas of their lives, including religious affiliation, political affiliation, reproductive freedom, sexual orientation and the option to work inside or outside the home.
- We will assist clients in exploring the alternatives available and support them in their choice.
- We will provide a safe place for all who come to us where their values are accepted and respected and where they will have no fear of either physical or psychological abuse.
- We respect and uphold the confidentiality of all .

### How We Help

Port Alberni, the largest community in the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District (ACRD), covers 6,600 square kilometers and includes ten First Nations territories. It has over 19,000 residents in Port Alberni, with more than 31,000 people in the regional district. Some smaller communities are accessible only by remote logging roads or boats.

According to the 2023 First Call Child Poverty Report, 20.3% of children in Port Alberni live in poverty. The ACRD's overall child poverty rate is 22.4%, making it one of the highest in British Columbia. This high rate highlights the pressing need for targeted interventions and support for families in the region.

First Call B.C. notes a significant disparity in poverty levels between single-parent and couple-parent families in the ACRD, with 62% of single-parent families living in poverty compared to 15% of couple-parent families. This highlights the greater financial challenges faced by single-parent households.

Sage Haven is dedicated to creating a safe and supportive environment for all women and children. We aim to foster real and lasting change by addressing the root causes of poverty and inequality in the ACRD, working together with local organizations, governments, and community members to build a future where all families can thrive.

Sources: https://portalberni.ca/community-profile https://firstcallbc.org/bc-child-poverty-report-card-2023/

Ne all have an important role to play

Every six days, a Woman is killed by her intimate partner in Canada.



### Our Core Programs

Transition House	<ul> <li>The Transition House provides a safe emergency shelter for women and their children fleeing domestic violence, offering 1,797 bed stays in 2023.</li> <li>Finding safe and affordable housing in our community remains extremely challenging, deterring some individuals from leaving abusive situations.</li> <li>Due to high demand, 356 women and children could not be housed at the Transition House, highlighting the critical need for additional supportive housing. The new Wiikšaḥiqu?ił Second Stage housing, which opened in December 2023, aims to address this gap with 22 units.</li> </ul>
Second Stage Housing	<ul> <li>Wiikšaḥiqu?ił Second Stage Housing, translating to "A Safe Place," is Sage Haven Society's newest program, supported by BC Housing. It offers private, secure, and affordable housing for women and children at risk of or having experienced violence, providing a safe environment for 6-18 months.</li> <li>The housing opened in mid-November with 22 fully furnished units. As of mid-December, it is fully occupied, housing 22 participants, including 15 children, 10 cats, and 3 dogs.</li> <li>The facility has two support staff on site Monday to Friday and provides personal care plans, training, and educational workshops to enhance participants' well-being. The Coulson Group generously donated televisions for each unit.</li> </ul>
: Community-Based Victim Services	Community-Based Victim Services provides critical incident response, emotional support, practical assistance, and referrals for victims of family and sexual violence, handling 326 cases in 2023, including 164 involving intimate partner violence. The service offers transportation to court and related meetings, assisting clients through all trial stages, including preparation, hearings, investigations, and the completion of impact statements and other necessary forms. Staff help clients develop safety plans and may refer them to additional programs and services for ongoing support, ensuring comprehensive care and assistance.
P.E.A.C.E. Program Children's Supportive Counselling	<ul> <li>The PEACE program offers individual and group counselling for children and youth aged 3-18 who have witnessed violence and abuse. It uses a psycho-educational approach to help children feel safe, respected, valued, and heard.</li> <li>In 2023, the program conducted 393 individual sessions for children and youth and 125 sessions for caregivers, receiving 118 referrals.</li> <li>The program also utilizes therapeutic expressive arts, like painting and sensory sand play, to help children process themes of isolation, anxiety, and trauma.</li> </ul>
nowhere to go, there	ng in the scariest movie you've ever been in when you're being threatened in your own home. There's B's no escape. It's hard to explain. Knowing what I know now I would say you must reach out and talk If it's quietly with friends, just say things aren't right at home. Don't let fear, embarrassment and

shame stand in the way. I reached out and Sage Haven changed my life! - Anonymous



Stopping the Violence Program Women's Supportive Counselling



Community Resource Drop-In Centre The Stopping the Violence program offers individual and group counselling for self-identified women aged 19 and above who have experienced domestic violence, historical violence, sexual assault, rape, and interpersonal violence.

The program employs a client-centered, trauma-informed, and feminist perspective, focusing on empowering women and aiding their healing process.

In 2023, the program served 65 new clients, conducted 28 group sessions, and 283 individual counselling sessions, addressing various issues including historical abuse (57 cases), sexual violence (24 cases), and intimate partner violence (58 cases).

The Drop-In Centre offers a safe, non-judgmental space for individuals to relax, learn, grow, and receive support, especially those in crisis. Services include access to clothing, personal hygiene items, coffee, food, Wi-Fi, computers, and phones.

In 2023, the Centre provided 2,255 harm reduction supplies and Naloxone kits, becoming an official distribution center.

The Centre also supports clients with rental subsidies and safety-related expenses, such as locks and security cameras, to help them start fresh in a healthier environment.



#### **Outreach Services**

Outreach workers assist clients in preparing for and attending appointments, including medical and school meetings, to help alleviate feelings of being overwhelmed.

Our staff provide personalized support to empower clients, ensuring they are well-prepared for their interactions with various organizations.

The program collaborates closely with school officials to support students at risk of disengaging from education, improving retention and reducing dropout rates.



Sexual Assault Response Program

SARP provides critical support to sexual assault survivors, bridging service gaps and offering direct crisis assistance. A team of 15 dedicated volunteers offers 24/7 hospital accompaniment and support.

Volunteers are equipped with a comprehensive 20-hour training program, ensuring they provide traumainformed care from a feminist perspective. In 2023, SARP provided emotional support, safety planning, and guidance to 15 survivors, all female, aged 13 to 60.

SARP collaborates with community organizations like Good Night Out to raise awareness and prevent sexual violence, aiming to create safer spaces and encourage more survivors to come forward.

I wasn't afraid that he would beat me, I was convinced that he would kill me. Leaving was not easy, but with the support of the Sage Haven Transition House and a safe space to recover, I was able to start over. I admit that it was difficult, but with staff support and understanding, I healed a lot. The essential services for survivors of domestic violence they offer are a lifeline. I no longer feel like a prisoner, cornered, or betrayed. There are so many things one goes through as a victim, including the psychological [persecution] but now I know that I can accomplish whatever I set my mind to. - Anonymous

Changing mistrust, fear, and shame to empowerment, courage and resilience

### Clients Served 2023/24

Our diverse services allow us to support a large number of women and children. In 2023/24, our Community Resource Centre alone had 9,710 visits! Here are a few statistics from some of our programs:

### **TRANSITION HOUSE**





46%

Of bed stays were Children



### **COMMUNITY RESOURCE & DROP IN CENTRE**



9,710 Client visits



.751 Supports provided to clients



2,255Harm reduction & naloxone kits



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I think we need to help empower women who are recovering from domestic violence. Women have so much to contribute and sometimes they just need a hand to get into that position. All women have got it — it's just a matter of not being encumbered by violence and fear.

> Ellen Frood ED Sage Haven Society

### 2022 / 2023 Highlights



### New 22-unit short-term housing development complete for those escaping violence By Denise Titian / November 21, 2023



Tseshaht Chief Councillor Ken Watts speaks at a ribbon-cutting ceremony marking 22 new transitional homes on Nov. 17 in Port Alberni. The Sage Haven Society is now accepting applications for residents. People are expected to move into their new homes in December. (Sage Haven Society photos)



2024	468 donors	180 walkers	\$51,368 amount raised	
2023	369 donors	117 walkers	\$45,091 amount raised	

### Our Plans for the Future

As we move forward, Sage Haven is dedicated to expanding and enhancing our services for women and children escaping abusive situations. The Wiikšaḥiquʔił Second Stage housing, now operational, provides 22 units of studio, one, two, and three-bedroom apartments, offering a safe and supportive environment for residents.

Women need a safe space, and Sage Haven provides that and more. We aim to fully utilize the Wiikšaḥiqu?ił Second Stage housing facility to offer comprehensive psycho-educational support, including counseling, educational programs, and drop-in services. Our focus is on empowering survivors and addressing gender-based violence, ensuring these issues are neither pervasive nor inevitable.

### Every year our programs support individuals:

- living in poverty
- facing food insecurity and homelessness
- experiencing substance use disorders
- at risk (youth and other populations)
- needing to rebuild and stay safe
- Survivors of human trafficking

- experiencing abuse, violence and sexual assault
- Those facing mental health challenges
- Individuals seeking support for parenting and family dynamics
- Immigrants and refugees requiring integration support

We continuously evaluate our services to meet the most pressing needs of our community. Our mission is to empower clients, amplify their voices, support survivors, and promote acceptance.

### Our Funding & Supporters

We are grateful for the financial support from BC Housing, the Ministry of Public Safety & Solicitor General, Island Health ~ Aboriginal Health, BC Community Gaming, the City of Port Alberni, and the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District.

Additional support from individuals, businesses, and non-profits is invaluable. The Coldest Night of the Year Event raised \$51,368 in 2024 with 468 donors and 180 walkers, and \$45,091 in 2023 with 369 donors and 117 walkers. This event helps fund essential services for the homeless, hungry, and hurting.

Community funding allows us to continue providing diverse programs and support to more people every year.

It's about all of us working together

## Your support goes a long way

We rely on generous support from community businesses, organizations, and individuals. As a non-profit, Sage Haven depends on volunteers and donations to sustain our work. Your contributions help us educate, nurture, and support the residents of Alberni-Clayoquot.

When you donate to Sage Haven, your money directly supports our services and programs, benefiting the most vulnerable members of our communities.

#### Partner with us

Formal and informal partnerships are welcome. Join us for our Coldest Night of the Year or join in other events.

#### **Corporate sponsorship**

Your business and employees can donate to either a specific program or Sage Haven can allocate where needed.

#### Make a one-time or monthly gift

Every donation can help us make a difference in the lives of people in need.

#### **Donate in someone's honour** Commemorate someone special with a donation.

**Launch your own event** Events create awareness about Sage Haven and bring new support to the organization.

#### Other

Have a fundraising idea? Whether you're a business or an individual, if you have an idea for a fundraiser, we'd love to hear from you.

### Get in touch with us

Our work is ongoing and those we serve need your support. The lives affected by Sage Haven are many and your support is essential.

If you have any questions about what we do and how you can help, contact Ellen Frood, Executive Director.

250-736-0702



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