

Brenda and Andy,
Victoria Brain Injury Society

| 2024 - 2025 COMMUNITY IMPACT DIRECTORY



United Way
Southern
Vancouver Island

Unite with us.
uwsvi.ca



Meghan and Emilio,
Burnside Gorge
Community Association

| FAMILIES

Strengthening local neighbourhood resources to help families succeed.

Families across Southern Vancouver Island face many pressures. The combination of rising inflation, escalating food and gas prices, and wages that often can't keep pace with the current economic climate, means that many families in our region are struggling more than ever to make ends meet.

Housing is also a major concern. According to the CMHC's Rental Market Survey from October 2023, the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Victoria is \$1,427 and a two-bedroom apartment is \$1,842. With an average price of more than \$1.3M for a single-family home in Victoria in May 2024 (according to the Victoria Real Estate Board), home ownership is unattainable for many Victoria families. Many families report that they're living paycheck to paycheck and sacrificing basic needs to make rent and pay for utilities.

United Way Southern Vancouver Island (UWSVI) believes that stable, healthy, and supported families are integral to a thriving community. To grow up with the life skills they need to succeed, children must have positive adult role models and a network of care from childhood to adulthood. Parents and caregivers often need a helping hand along the way to provide the best environment possible for their children.

Being a good neighbour means looking out for those around us and connecting them to the programs and services when and where they need them. United with you, we are working to make sure that no family is left behind.

I FAMILIES

1UP Single Parent Resource Centre | Moms and Mentors

Isolated single moms are matched with volunteer mentors for a year of friendship, support, and positive parental role modelling. The program develops the capacity of single moms to form community connections and develop additional parenting and life skills that enable them to be more resilient and empowered parents.

Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness | Indigenous Family and Community Reunification - Coming Together

This program provides Indigenous Street Family and ACEH Family Members with access to a three-bedroom townhouse for visits and to reconnect with their children in care or living with extended family. Additionally, the townhouse provides space for family members to host their families from out of town while attending ceremonies or funerals.

Balfour's Friends Foundation | Compassion for Companions

Low-income people can gain access to veterinary care for their sick and injured pets—up to \$600 per pet annually—through this program. Applications for assistance are submitted by veterinarians and the income threshold for assistance is \$35,000 for single person households and \$45,000 for households with two or more people. Most clients are seniors and people with disabilities; others include single-parent families, unemployed individuals, and survivors of domestic abuse.

Bayanihan Cultural and Housing Society | Kapwa: Supporting Elders' Well-being in the Filipino Canadian Community

This program focuses on enhancing the well-being of Filipino-Canadian elders. The initiative addresses three critical areas: community connections, mental health support, and physical well-being. The Kapwa program is committed to nurturing a connected, resilient, and inclusive Filipino-Canadian elder community.

BGC South Vancouver Island | Suite Spot

Suite Spot expands the Youth Prenatal and Parenting (YP3) program by 33% to provide second-stage transitional housing for graduating YP3 families at risk of homelessness. The program offers families the opportunity to reside independently in separate suites—co-located within contracted care family homes—for up to one year, receiving support and stable housing while they prepare to move into their own community-based housing. This bridging year will provide families with 24-hour support to secure safe, affordable future housing, childcare options, and skills development to increase their self-sufficiency.

BGC South Vancouver Island | The Village Initiative

The Village Initiative (TVI) is a regional network of more than 40 community organizations that are working together to improve the lives of children, youth, and families in the Sooke and West Shore region. TVI members are working to build collaborative solutions to the program challenges faced by community organizations in one of BC's fastest growing regions.

I FAMILIES

Big Brothers Big Sisters of Victoria Capital Region | B You: Healthy Bodies Healthy Minds

This program serves female-identifying individuals who are struggling socially and emotionally. In partnership with area middle schools, female-identifying youth aged nine to 15 who face adversities are matched in a group with three trained mentors. The mentees benefit from tools to help them build self-esteem; develop healthy boundaries; improve their communication skills; feel physically, mentally, and emotionally safe; find a voice to advocate for themselves; and feel connected to the community.

Child Abuse Prevention and Counselling Society of Greater Victoria | Child Abuse Trauma Counselling

This child and youth abuse counselling program provides services delivered by Child and Family Therapists (each accredited with a master's degree) in the form of one-on-one counselling with the child/youth, sometimes with their family. Depending on the needs of the client, this may range from only a handful of sessions to 30 or more.

Community Options for Children and Families | Family Support Program

This program supports children and youth who have a sibling with high needs. Participants forge relationships with peers while doing fun activities. Family picnics and dinners throughout the year provide parents and extended family members with a safe and welcoming environment for connection. Program coordinators also work alongside parents, assisting in practical ways (e.g. researching resources, form completion, meetings with professionals, attending medical or school appointments).

Community Social Planning Council of Greater Victoria (CSPC) | Greater Victoria Coordinated Identification Services

ID is necessary to access vital services and supports like housing, health care, income security, and other social services. This regional service increases access to and/or storage of ID through weekly drop-in clinics or direct referrals. To ensure the services are low barrier, clinic locations range from downtown service spaces to hospitals, libraries, and Indigenous partners. CSPC serves a range of vulnerable groups, including seniors, youth, women exiting violence, people in substance use recovery, and those involved in corrections. Over 60% are unhoused or temporarily housed and over 30% are Indigenous.

Cridge Centre for the Family | Respite Program

In this program, parents or guardians of a child with a disability are given the opportunity for rest and rejuvenation in a welcoming, comfortable environment while their child receives respite care in the family home. Participating parents receive a complimentary overnight stay for two in a local hotel, bed-and-breakfast, or resort. Parents who are unable to enjoy an overnight hotel stay are offered complimentary enhancements—including entertainment certificates, flowers, or tickets to Victoria attractions (when available). This program is about 'caring for the caregivers' and is a partnership between the hospitality industry, local businesses, and community services agencies.

I FAMILIES

Daily Dose Society | Wheels For Recovery

Wheels for Recovery provides mobile outreach and transportation to (re)connect people to services and community. An adaptation of the drop-in model focuses on outreach, system navigation, and community (re)connection services, helping individuals stay engaged in care, reducing missed appointments, supporting partner organizations' work with clients, reducing service duplication, and expanding the program's reach.

Fairfield Gonzales Community Association | Food Security Programming

Having access to good food is a basic right. This initiative features two weekly free food distribution programs, and hamper deliveries to families with limited mobility. In addition, an accessible, outdoor community pantry is provided to the community 24/7, along with an indoor community freezer available during office hours.

Family Caregivers Society of BC | Caregiver Support Program

This program focuses on people in the CRD who are caring for a family member or friend struggling with chronic disease, mental health challenges, or frailty due to aging. The program offers direct one-on-one support in identifying needs, helping navigate the health and social systems, goal setting, and brief action planning. A collaboration with multicultural and Indigenous community agencies has provided a greater insight into culturally diverse family caregiving models, to provide appropriate support to individuals in caregiving roles.

Family Services of Greater Victoria | Family Matters

Family Matters is a four-part program that includes individual counselling and psycho-educational groups to provide timely and effective support and services to all family members facing change and challenges in their relationships. It also offers access to legal information and support. The program includes parent/caregiver sessions to address common challenges like parental stress, child behavioural issues, relationship conflicts, coping skills, and assisting children to stay safely connected with both parents in post-separation circumstances.

Farmlands Trust | Agriculture Land Protection Program

Small farms in the Saanich Peninsula can access the supports they need to continue producing local food through this program. Protecting and preserving farmlands and agricultural, natural, and cultural features of our region benefits present and future generations. These efforts are intended to relieve poverty while promoting awareness and interest in the importance of maintaining local sustainable agriculture and food security.

Home is Where We Live - LifeCycles Project Society | Welland Community Learning Orchard and Fruit Tree Project

This project supports one of the largest and most diverse community orchards in Canada, and connects dedicated volunteers with fruit tree owners in the Greater Victoria region. Volunteers offer backyard fruit gleanings and farm gleanings services in the region, reducing food waste, increasing food security and strengthening the local food system. Additionally, participants are offered hands-on and informational educational opportunities.

I FAMILIES

Harvest and Share Food Relief Society | School Program

This program teaches approximately 55 grade five students each school year about how to grow food sustainably. Participating children gain practical experience in seed germination, transplanting seedlings, and managing the nutrient solution, fostering a hands-on understanding of the entire cultivation process. They also learn about social responsibility and aiding those in need, skills for self-sufficiency, and the joy of reaping what you sow. Gardening also offers therapeutic benefits and serves as a stress-reduction tool, promoting improved mental health.

Hulitan Family and Community Services | Hulitan Trauma Informed Daycare

Hulitan Family and Community Services Society is opening the first trauma-informed, Indigenous-focused daycare centre in British Columbia. The Colwood-based centre will provide 73 low-to-no-cost childcare space while nurturing the Indigenous cultural identity of the children in its care and preparing them to transition into the public school system. The Hulitan Early Childhood Years Centre will foster the intellectual, spiritual, emotional, and physical development of Indigenous children.

LDABC the Learning Curve | Family Support Program

This program provides an array of services to educate, support, and advocate for children with learning disabilities and their families. Children and parents are provided with a continuum of services, including referrals, support, educational resources, and counselling. The program also provides community members, organizations, and education professionals with resources to better support children with learning disabilities.

Living Edge | Living Edge Food Markets

Providing free, fresh groceries to anyone who needs them is the goal of these food markets. This project works collaboratively with food organizations to gather recovered food from grocery stores and distributors, redistributing the food through seven weekly Living Edge Neighbourhood Markets in the CRD. Living Edge is an important link to get food to food-insecure families, seniors and other individuals on low incomes.

Oak Bay Volunteer Services Society | Increasing Community Connections to Reduce Isolation

To help mitigate the damaging effects of isolation, this program provides one-to-one services and group programs to support seniors, families, and newcomers alike. This volunteer program supports the emotional, social, financial, and general wellbeing of clients. Due to the complex needs of clients, OBVS also provides referrals to other services in the community. The combination of services, programs, and referrals enables people to care for themselves more effectively by ensuring a team of support services are in place.

Saanich Neighbourhood Place | Healthy Families; Healthy Communities

This program provides services and resources that help parents and individuals build skills that improve their capacity to make positive changes in their lives and those of their children. The program addresses the growing need for mental health and other programs with a combination of services, including individualized support and outreach services, parenting programs, food education for youth, parents and caregivers, and early years support.

I FAMILIES

Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands Community Services Society | The Core Youth Centre

The Core, a three-story heritage building in the heart of Ganges, provides youth with a welcoming and supportive environment where they can spend time doing healthy activities. This program provides a drug and alcohol free, supportive environment for youth 11 to 18. The program builds social connections, healthy relationships, and connects youth with additional helping resources when necessary.

Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands Community Services Society | Youth Health Clinic Initiative (Collective Impact)

This project supports the development of a youth health clinic on Salt Spring Island. This would create a foundation of primary health care, mental health services, and social services delivery for high-risk youth in a single coordinated service delivery model hosted by Salt Spring and Southern Gulf Islands Community Services.

Shelbourne Kitchen Society | Food Skills Program

Through healthy food, this program brings people of all ages, cultures, and abilities together. Participants learn basic nutrition, food sourcing, meal planning, safe food handling practices, seasonal eating, and preservation techniques—all with a limited food budget. Participants also lead and help develop programs that celebrate the wealth of experience, skills, and talent that they bring to our community. Participants, practicum students and volunteers have led classes like Japanese Comfort Food and Family Favourites from Syria.

Soap for Hope Canada | Double the Demand

This program provides essential hygiene amenities and linens to community facilities serving vulnerable people in Greater Victoria. This includes shelters, transitional homes, food banks, low-income senior facilities, schools, refugees and Indigenous communities. The program helps support local families who are struggling financially and are reaching out for basic products to help alleviate inflation and the rise in costs.

Sooke Family Resource Society | Pre-natal and post-natal

Pre- and post-natal education, support, and outreach are this program's focus, offering locally accessible, low to no-cost services to women in the Sooke to Port Renfrew region. The majority of families accessing this program are experiencing one or more of: mental health challenges, domestic violence, young parenting, identification within the LGBTQ12-S community, Ministry of Children and Family Development involvement, disability (self or newborn/baby), unstable housing, substance use challenges, poverty, living on reserve in a rural setting, living in isolation, food instability/nutritional needs, being a newcomer to Canada, and/or transportation challenges.

Soroptimist International of Victoria-Westshore | Anney's Closet

Anney's Closet is a "free store" for women and girls fleeing domestic violence situations, aging out of foster care, or leaving unsafe living environments. Advocates at community partner social service agencies refer the women and girls, who then select household items from Anney's Closet that can transform their new living spaces into a functional and comfortable homes. Volunteers sort and

I FAMILIES

arrange donated items in the Closet, build relationships with social agencies and the community, and help shoppers pick out essential items for their new homes.

Together Against Poverty Society (TAPS) | Eviction Prevention for Families

This program focuses on housing stability and the maintenance of housing for vulnerable families, both on an individual and community level. The program combines the direct service of legal advocates for families in need with TAPS' organizational experience in government relations and policy reform to prevent eviction for individual families and focus on what policy changes can be made to prevent future evictions without the need for direct intervention.

Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre | Enable Program for Newcomer Children and Youth

Social, academic, and emotional support are provided to newcomer children, youth and their families through this program. A holistic, client-centered approach is used to meet young people where they are and provide them with the opportunity to increase their sense of identity, belonging, and community within their environment. Through group social activities, one-on-one academic help, art therapy groups, and individualized action-planning, Enable helps newcomers feel empowered and included.

Victoria Literacy Connection Society | Family Literacy (post-COVID reading lag)


This program tackles local elementary school students' "COVID reading lag"—fallout from the pandemic, which resulted in lower than usual reading levels. This intensive volunteer-facilitated reading support program provides tools and support for parents to encourage reading in the home. SD61 and SD62 have already expressed their enthusiasm for this program and are welcoming it in their target elementary schools. VLC will also offer this program for SD63.

Victoria Native Friendship Centre | Back to School Picnic

The Back to School Picnic strives to heal the atmosphere around going back to school and the intergenerational trauma of the residential schools. The program, which began as a poverty relief effort, is now a new way to look at reconciliation. In Victoria, the Picnic is held at Government House in August and serves approximately 1,500 urban Indigenous children and their families. Each participating child receives age-appropriate school supplies.

Victoria Rainbow Kitchen Society | In House Hot Meals and Food Sharing

Each year Rainbow Kitchen, with the assistance of more than 200 volunteers, prepares and serves a nutritious, tasty hot lunch to about 140 people a day, five days a week, at the Esquimalt United Church through this safe and supportive program for poor and marginalized people. The Kitchen has also expanded meal service into two local schools, providing 2,200+ breakfasts each month. As a community "food hub," Rainbow Kitchen also helps store and distribute goods to like-minded organizations, assisting many people who are unable to visit the kitchen in person. The majority of food is donated by corporate partners who share the program's goal of establishing food security independence for those in need.



Ted, James Bay
New Horizons

| SENIORS

Providing seniors and elders with the support they need to age with dignity.

Seniors over the age of 65 make up close to 23% of the population in our region. But not all are living their autumnal years in stress-free circumstances. On the contrary: on Southern Vancouver Island, many seniors face extreme loneliness and isolation, malnutrition, and limited income—all factors that greatly impact their physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing.

Sadly, throughout BC there has been a 78% increase in the use of food banks by seniors in the past five years. And 20% of seniors report housing affordability challenges.

Research has linked social isolation and loneliness to higher risks for various physical and mental conditions, including high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, depression, and cognitive decline.

Our connection to others is what enables us to survive and thrive. Our seniors and elders are essential to a robust, healthy, and inclusive community. United with you, we will ensure that seniors and elders can age with dignity and respect, with access to the important services they need when and where they need them.

| SENIORS

BC Muslim Association - Victoria Branch | Improving Elderly Well-being in Our Community

This initiative works to improve the lives and wellbeing of elders in the community through in-home support (like companionship), transportation to essential services and social events, and the development of tailored social and well-being activities, including wellness workshops, cultural outings, and social events. This comprehensive approach fosters independence, mental and physical health, and community integration.

Beacon Community Association | More Than Meals

More than Meals provides isolated, vulnerable seniors in the CRD with nutritious meals and social connection. The program, in conjunction with other senior-serving agencies in the community, coordinates volunteers to deliver three meals per week to each senior, as well as provide reassurance check-in calls/visits. The meals and social outreach to vulnerable seniors enables them to maintain their health and wellbeing and successfully age in place.

Bridges for Women Society | The Journey Forward

This counselling program is available to all participants of Bridges' trauma-informed employment skills programs. Clinical counsellors are available to provide therapy in the modalities that support womenfolk who are rebuilding their lives after experiencing interpersonal violence. The clinical counsellors are all registered with a governing body and have credentials in therapies specific to trauma.

Fernwood Neighbourhood Resource Group | Grandparent's Corner

An intergenerational initiative that brings together Fernwood community members of all ages. Elders share their life experience and expertise to help and mentor younger generations, and young people use their knowledge to support seniors. The theme of each drop-in session will change, depending on the abilities of the participating seniors and the needs expressed by young people; themes might include music skills, image consulting, cooking, cultural recipe sharing, upcycling, art, and knitting.

James Bay New Horizons Society (JBNH) | Senior Food Security and Social Support

This program currently provides two sit-down meals every week for seniors on a set schedule: Tuesday lunch (in cooperation with Beckley Farm Lodge, for \$6 per plate) and Sunday suppers (free). In addition to these weekly meals, once a month eligible seniors may receive a protein pack (cheese, meat, chicken, fish), provided at no cost. In times of immediate need, JBNH has also provided participants with a gift card to a local grocer.

Mayne Island Assisted Living Society | Seniors Care on Mayne Island

Seniors Care helps reduce social isolation and enhance quality of life for Mayne Island seniors, while preventing critical issues that could compromise their ability to age in place. The Day Program is a safe, structured social gathering for seniors, providing respite for caregivers and varied activities for their loved ones.

I SENIORS

Mayne Island Assisted Living Society | Mayne Island Collective (Collective Impact)

This project envisions Mayne Island as a resilient, connected community. The rural, low-income island currently has limited services for seniors; the mission of the project is to drive systemic change that creates an age-friendly haven, allowing seniors to age in place with dignity. This isn't solely about individual projects; it's a continuous effort where every resident's voice holds weight. Through collaborative decision-making and community engagement, the aim is to transform Mayne Island's future to support people of all ages and backgrounds.

Mental Health Recovery Partners Society - South Vancouver Island | Community of Healing and Belonging

A trained peer support team walks shoulder to shoulder with participants, demonstrating how recovery and living a good life are possible, even with a diagnosis of mental illness. They provide one-to-one peer support to individuals who self-refer or are referred through community partners. Peer support staff lead and facilitate support groups and training. For some peer supporters, these are groups they once attended themselves as they commenced their own recovery journeys. Team members also participate in sharing their recovery journeys at events and workshops.

Oaklands Community Association | Seniors Food Security Services

An expansion of existing senior-specific and senior-dominated programming. New services will be created, such as a seniors' summer and winter dinner, a monthly 2SLGBTQ+ Seniors Coffee & Chat, a delivery service for seniors under the existing Pantry Program, a weekly seniors' walking group, a weekly seniors' Gentle Movement class, and three annual seniors' workshops—covering such relevant topics as taxes, home repair, and cooking.

Oasis Society for the Spiritual Health of Victoria | Integrated Recovery and Holistic Wellness

Physical and mental wellbeing support for Indigenous community members who are experiencing multi-generational trauma, expressed in homelessness and mental health and substance use challenges. Outreach includes opportunities to connect to the land and natural food sources through half-day, day-long or multi-day outings to local Coast Salish Nations, gatherings involving the sharing of food, monthly group sessions that focus on establishing friendships, and wellness activities rooted in cultural teachings and art.

Saanich Volunteer Services Society (SVSS) | Independent Living and Food Security

This program supports seniors and adults with challenges that hinder their ability to maintain independent living. These challenges include disabilities, health concerns, limited mobility, financial constraints, sight impairment, frailty, transportation barriers, home management difficulties, recovery from acute illnesses or injuries, food insecurity, and struggles with accessing community resources. SVSS works with individuals and other service providers and organizations to support healthy communities.

| SENIORS

Silver Threads Service | Food Security for Seniors

Offered at two local seniors' centres, this program consists of a food share project, grocery hampers, the provision of baked goods from COBS Bread, and hygiene kits and toiletries for seniors and elders in need. Meals are served to bring people together to connect socially, while giving support to, and receiving from, each other.

The Galiano Club | Galiano Club Community Food Program

A holistic, multi-faceted community-based program that works to increase food security and a sense of belonging and connection on Galiano Island. The Food Program works collaboratively with many island organisations to utilize the limited resources of a small community and provide low-cost soup and meals, inter-generational social events, skill-building workshops, a school program, a cheese making club, a garlic growing co-op, and opportunities for individuals to contribute significantly to their community.

Victoria Disability Resource Centre | Peer Outreach

One-to-one peer support for older adults (seniors) who may be experiencing isolation and loneliness. A team of trained peer supporters reaches out to older adults in the community who are living with reduced mobility and/or compromised immune systems, providing a friendly voice, a listening ear, and community resources if needed.

Victoria Stroke Recovery Association | Stroke Recovery Programs

Stroke survivors and care partners are provided with counselling, information, group support programs, education, social enrichment, and recreational activities, including tools to improve quality of life, combat isolation and loneliness and promote independent living. Communication skills therapy is led by a speech language pathologist, adaptive exercise by a certified exercise specialist, and music therapy by a certified music therapist. Additionally, a counsellor or care partner provides support for continued rehabilitation after discharge from hospital, medical and therapy treatments.



Josh (and "team Josh"),
Umbrella Society

I MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Supporting people with mental health and/or addictions challenges and their families.

Good mental health helps us enjoy our lives and the people in it. It's hard to thrive and when you're struggling with mental health and/or addictions issues. The range of consequences is overwhelming: imagine dealing with fear or rejection, family breakdown or job loss, the inability to finish your education, or struggling with a social stigma that impacts your quality of life.

In general, Victoria and Southern Vancouver Island have a high rate of mental health issues, as well as one of the highest overdose rates in the province. The opioid epidemic continues to affect people from all walks of life and all socio-economic backgrounds. Many people struggle with mental health challenges and/or addictions, but it can be hard to talk about it. Too often, stigma gets in the way of asking for help.

UWSVI works with social service organizations on community-based initiatives focused on mental health and addictions education, awareness, prevention, and early intervention.

United with you, we're creating more inclusive communities and ensuring those impacted by mental health and addictions issues can easily access the supports they need without stigma and before challenges become deep-rooted.

I MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Anawim Companions Society | Drop-In and Residential Programs

The Anawim Companions Society Drop-In Program offers a drop-in continental breakfast, sign-up lunch, showers, laundry, and support to the street community. The Residential Program offers housing, access to basic counselling, support, and services to residents: seven men at Anawim House and seven women at the new women's house, Susan's Place.

Burnside Gorge Community Association | Family Self Sufficiency Program

This innovative, asset-building and financial literacy skill development program is for low-income families. The aim is to increase employability and financial capacity, build financial literacy skills and knowledge, improve self-reliance, and facilitate less dependence on government supports while providing links to community resources.

Coalition of Neighbourhood Houses | Food Distribution Program

This program expands and coordinates the family, child, and youth-focused food programs offered through the 10 neighbourhood house partners that make up the Coalition of Neighborhood Houses - Capital Region. It enables the neighbourhood houses to provide family meals, community kitchens, food skill programs and facilitate access to healthy food.

Esquimalt Neighbourhood House Society | Saturday Market

The Saturday Markets provide free of charge produce and food essentials to vulnerable Esquimalt community members. Dedicated volunteers organize and facilitate the market every week, to provide essential nutrition to those in need.

Friends of Living and Learning Through Loss | Youth Loss and Grief Education and Support

Learning Through Loss designs loss and grief education and support programs for South Island youth ages 13-24 years old, delivered through workshops, support groups, counselling and resources. All services are delivered at no cost to youth, through schools, social support agencies and individual outreach, based on values of peer support, accessibility and inclusivity, empathy, compassion, connection, and community learning.

Greater Victoria Citizens' Counselling Centre | Adult Counselling Services

This counselling program provides short-term, accessible, and affordable individual, couples and group counselling to low-income adults. All direct service is provided by volunteer counsellors who are trained and supervised at the Centre.

Greater Victoria Social Gathering Place Society | Imagine Afternoons

A bi-weekly conversation cafe designed for individuals in mental health recovery, providing a nurturing environment for peer support and connection. Participants engage in various activities, enjoy nutritious food, and have the opportunity to share their experiences through an open mic format. This inclusive program offers a safe space for individuals with similar backgrounds to come together, fostering a sense of community and belonging.

I MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Human-Nature Counselling Society | Expanding Accessible Mental Health Counselling: Matching our Capacity to Trends

The Human-Nature Counselling Society provides experiential therapy that takes the therapeutic process beyond the office walls, to include interactions with the natural world. Dedicated, highly trained professional counsellors work extensively with clients who have exhausted more traditional, office-based clinical services or who are looking for an approach that incorporates their love of the natural world. Counselling services include help for stress, anxiety, and depression, trauma and post traumatic stress, family conflict, ADHD, relationship distress, grief and loss, existential concerns, life transitions, LGBTQ2S+ issues, and emotional regulation.

Island Community Mental Health Association | Psychosocial Rehabilitation (PSR) - PEER Support

This project is part of a comprehensive programming initiative of five core programs, facilitated by trained peer facilitators, all of whom have lived experience. Peer facilitators are paid a living unionized wage to facilitate a weekly program which includes three days of drop-in programming (cooking, sharing lunch, and art). They also offer a weekly virtual one-hour goal setting group and a weekly one-hour book club. The aim of programming is to reduce isolation, create social connection, and offer a safe space to meet in an environment of shared experience and non-judgement.

Island Deaf and Hard of Hearing Centre Association | Sound of Change Initiative

An innovative service designed to fight isolation for some of our most vulnerable populations. The initiative provides hearing assessments, refurbished hearing aids, tech aids, aural rehab, workshops, and speechreading classes, all free of charge to low income and vulnerable seniors with hearing loss.

NEED2 Suicide Prevention Education and Support | Youth Suicide Prevention Programs

These programs provide compassionate, person-centered support across a spectrum of mental health levels. Youthspace.ca supports youth in our region experiencing immediate crisis/intense mental health challenges through an online crisis chat services. The school suicide prevention workshops equip youth attending school in our region with the knowledge to recognize signs of distress and the skills necessary to support someone experiencing a mental health crisis—including themselves. Together, these programs create a wrap-around service for youth in our region that decreases suicidal behaviors by encouraging youth to talk openly about their struggles and access resources when experiencing mental health challenges.

North Park Neighbourhood Association | Food Hamper Program

A collaboration between the North Park Neighbourhood Association and The AbbeyChurch (a ministry of the Emmaus Community), this secular program is open to all, and provides free, nutritious grocery hampers to low-income families, adults, seniors, and elders in the North Park neighbourhood. The program increases food security and community connectivity and improves well-being through referrals to community organizations. The program serves as a weekly in-person connection for isolated and vulnerable folks.

I MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Olive Branch Revival Foundation (OBRF) | A Bridge to Wellness: A New Pathway for Immigrant & Refugee Youth

Up to 200 African, Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Southeast Asian youth ages six to 29 are provided with reliable, discreet, and barrier-free access to in-person, phone, and online mental health and substance use counselling services that are culturally safe, relevant, and free of stigma. The program serves youth in culturally safe ways that meet their self-identified needs. The OBRF will develop an online portal allowing youth in the community to access mental health and substance use counselling and care planning services quickly, easily, and discreetly through qualified professionals and case workers.

Pacific Centre Family Services Association (PCFSA) | Intake and Referral Services

This program supports a counsellor in establishing client counselling and support needs at the first initial contact to the organization. This can be by direct contact to PCFSA by the individual, family member or friend, or referral by a community partner agency. Persons served through the Intake Program are able to move seamlessly between PCFSA programs with the support of the intake worker. Assessment of the client needs by the counsellor provides and maintains a smooth transition between integrated services.

Pacific Training Centre for the Blind | Blind People In Charge

The only program of its kind in Canada, Blind People in Charge is an empowering independence program offered at no charge to blind and DeafBlind adults. The program offers regular, intensive blindness rehabilitation and uses a problem-solving model of instruction where blind people teach/run the program; students learn from people with lived experience. Instructors teach Braille, adaptive technology, cane travel, cooking, and other life skills, and help participants develop positive strategies for living as blind and DeafBlind people.

Peers Victoria Resources Society | Drop In

A community wellness and inclusion program for current and former sex workers, the drop-in is a weekday program at Peers that runs Monday to Thursday each week. Participants enjoy breakfast/snacks, a group hot lunch, a wellness education workshop, access to computers, a donation room, nurse services, and harm reduction supplies. The drop-in program also serves as a pivotal access point: attendees can easily gain access to other Peers programs, like housing support, health care access support, and other specialized programs.

Sooke Family Resource Society | Caring for Community Counselling

Affordable counselling for individuals, teens, couples, and families in Sooke. Caring for Community Counselling is a fee-for-service, sliding scale program. The program has one, full-time, Master's level clinician who is trauma-informed and sees a wide variety of presentations and issues, including anxiety, depression, family conflict, PTSD, couples conflict, and more.

I MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Sooke Transition House | PEACE Program

This program supports children, youth, and families impacted by crisis and family violence. Weekly counselling sessions offer a safe place where children can safely share and express their emotions while building resilience and coping strategies to help them deal with challenging situations. The peace counsellors incorporate play, art, storytelling, narrative approaches, and relationship-building into the sessions, helping vulnerable families rebuild their attachments and move ahead into a life without violence.

The Circle Salt Spring Education Society | The Empathy Project

An elementary in-school mental health/violence prevention program that equips students with the skills, mindset, and values necessary to form positive connections. By helping students to prioritize an understanding of the perspectives and experiences of others, they may develop a deeper appreciation for the impact of their actions. This leads to more compassionate and nonviolent interactions and more inclusive and supportive communities, in the classroom and beyond.

Umbrella Society for Addictions and Mental Health | Peer Outreach Program

This program works with anyone for whom substance use has become a problem, assisting clients and their family members as they identify their own needs in an accessible, inclusive, culturally appropriate, and non-judgemental environment. Emotional and tangible supports include counselling and connections to related community resources. The Peer Outreach program builds meaningful relationships with clients and their families to help them make positive life changes.

Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrant and Refugees Society (VICCIR) | Mental Health Counselling for Immigrants and Refugees

Immigrants and refugees are provided with low and no-cost mental health counselling through this program. By providing easy-access counselling to individuals of all ages, the program also supports isolated seniors and families in need. The majority of VICCIR clients are from racialized communities, and the program helps create a community that is welcoming, inclusive and equitable for all.

Victoria Brain Injury Society | Peer Support

Volunteers who have experienced concussion or brain injury are trained to support new members and can refer survivors to useful community resources. This program plays a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life and fostering a sense of belonging among survivors of brain injuries. Mentorship and group support is provided along with advice for living with brain injury, suggestions of community resources, and the provision of a safe space by peer supporters. This not only provides a support network for survivors but also extends its benefits to family, friends, and the wider community.

I MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Society | Sexual Assault Response Team: Increasing Capacity for Immediate Response

The Sexual Assault Response Team (SART) is available 24/7, providing immediate support for survivors of recent sexual assault in our community. The SART team, alongside partners like forensic nurses and law enforcement, ensures survivors receive prompt care and emotional support. Before SART protocol was established, survivors faced long waits in emergency rooms without specialized care. Now, survivors can access a dedicated support network, including accompaniment to medical exams and police stations and specialized counseling.

Victoria Sexual Assault Centre Society VSAC | kʷənə nətəl iʔ iʔsæt Indigenous Response Network (IRN) (Collective Impact)

The kʷənə nətəl iʔ iʔsæt Indigenous Response Network (IRN) works to increase knowledge about how sexualized and gender-based violence intersects with communities served by VSAC. The network also deepens understandings of root causes through network connections, and development of culturally relevant and specific local resources for addressing sexualized violence and mental health. Since its inception in 2019, IRN has worked to repair, build, expand and maintain a network of Indigenous community leaders, Indigenous serving organizations, and anti-violence organizations.

Victoria Youth Empowerment Society | The Youth Wellness Program

A program supporting youth (ages 13-20) who are experiencing ongoing mental health challenges, including isolation, anxiety, loneliness, and depression. Through individual and family support, advocacy, workshops and peer-based recreation activities, the program offers a mental health well-being approach designed to foster a youth's sense of belonging and community connectedness. The program aims to improve youth and families' coping skills and model healthy peer relationships that create protective factors in vulnerable youth's lives, regardless of their circumstances.

An online version of this Community Impact Directory, featuring an interactive map that identifies the reach of each UWSVI-supported social service agency and program throughout the various regions of Southern Vancouver Island, is also available.

Visit uwsvi.ca/communityimpactdirectory to explore the directory.