

ANNUAL REPORT

Peak House

Pacific Youth & Family Services Society

2013/14



2427 Turner Street
Vancouver, BC
V5K 2E7

t. 604-253-2187
f. 604-253-3581
admin@peakhouse.ca
www.peakhouse.ca

Executive Director's Report

Last year we celebrated our 25th anniversary! Quite an accomplishment for a small organization to survive the often-unstable waters of the non-profit/social-profit sector. Our continued success as a program would not be possible without the ongoing support of our community, funders, donors, families, friends, caregivers, service providers, volunteers, and our dedicated and hard working staff and board. A special thank you to our contract manager, Lorraine Grieves at Vancouver Coastal Health.

Everyone together is a part of the care network that supports our courageous young people and their families in their journey away from problematic substance use and toward a life of achievable dreams and goals.

This past year our program has developed some incredible new components, and worked diligently to ensure we are fulfilling our values, mission and organizational goals, while consistently keeping the youth at the centre of the work that we do. Our team is always eager to learn and embrace new skills through our training and education opportunities.

We welcomed new staff and energy to the team and said good-bye to those who moved on to pursue other opportunities. I would like to personally thank the team, board, and Wendy Wittmack, our Program Manager, for their ongoing support of my leadership and their dedication to the program and to the young people and families we serve. Working alongside a hard-working and supportive team creates the kind of exceptional opportunities for innovation and leadership within the sector Peak House is proud to be known for.

We look forward to our 26th year with optimism, enthusiasm and dedication to the community.

James Kelly

Staff Report

We have had a full and successful year at Peak House. We are pleased to welcome new staff members to our team and look forward to growing and learning together. We wish those that moved on all the success in their future endeavours.

While our Clinical Supervisor, Vikki Reynolds, was abroad for work and travel, we had the pleasure of working with long-time Peak House team member, Christine Dennstedt, as Clinical Supervisor. She facilitated new and exciting workshops and honored us with her wisdom and support.

Last summer Peak House celebrated our 25th anniversary. We celebrated by hosting our annual Peak House barbeque and honored staff members Wendy Wittmack, our Program Manager, Laila Biergans our Night Attendant, and Yan Ho our Cook for their long-term service and commitment to the program.

The youth have participated in many fun activities and learning opportunities; favorites include: Whole Foods tours, Science World, Buddhist Temple, karaoke night, nature hikes, weekly acupuncture, fitness, yoga, creative expression, and community speaker presentations and workshops. As a part of our Healthy Tuesdays series, which has completed its first year of practice, the youth enjoyed visits from Nurse Elaine Jones, and Children of the Street Society. Our young people continue to share their creativity and voices through publishing their writing in The Carnegie Newsletter and making fantastic art, displayed on the walls of Peak House. We are making an effort to provide the youth with more cultural and spiritual knowledge, which has been made possible through the creation of the Cultural Consultant position.

This year we celebrated Anti-Bullying Day by decorating pink t-shirts, taking pictures in the park, and then creating a poster, which can be found on display in the kitchen. The monthly alumni group continues to be a source of inspiration for the youth currently in the program as well as for youth whom have commenced. This group, along with our alumni speaker night, continues to build a community of support for Peak House youth, even after their time in the program has ended.

We are currently enthusiastically working toward many new and exciting program developments in the upcoming year including the implementation of mindfulness practices, video counselling, and more volunteer time in the local community as a way for youth to give back. This year the staff team worked collaboratively with the youth to revise the After Care Plan modules to be of the most use and hopefully continue to be a valuable document for young persons and their supports in the years to come. Beyond strengthening our involvement with the youth, the staff team continues to plan fun, team building days. As we continue to put the youth at the centre of our work we find ourselves building memories, skills and joyfulness, we look forward to many great times ahead.

Clinical Supervisor's Report

Christine Dennstedt PhD, RCC acted as Clinical Supervisor for several months in 2013 as I was on leave. Christine has an extensive history with Peak House and has served as a Clinical Counsellor. Her PhD thesis addressed the work of the Peak House Program across time to address issues of what is called 'disordered eating' and substance misuse. Christine's research looked at the ways these problems exist together and strategies to resist them. We greatly appreciate Christine stepping up and working in this capacity for Peak House, and plan to continue our collaborations with her.

As the Peak House Clinical Supervisor I meet with both the Youth Counselling Team and the Clinical Counselling Team on a monthly basis. We embrace a Living Supervision model, which includes the supervisor being present and engaged in counselling work alongside the counsellors. This offers accountability to the work and invites making our work public in ways that require more than the counsellors self-reports. As the clinical supervisor I participate in the Re-Authoring Group, and Community Group, as well as individual counselling sessions. I also offer trainings to our staff team as required addressing issues decided in collaboration with the Executive Director and Program Director.

The Youth Counsellor Supervision Meeting continues to be practice based skill development, The format of the ongoing learning is experiential learning, and at times it is skill based related to counselling conversations. This year there were visiting Instructors who provided workshops to the team on various issues such as Meditation and Mindfulness practices. The Clinical Counselling Team consists of Bhupinder Dulay and Jamie Whitehead.

The Clinical Counselling Team Supervision meeting also takes many forms, and sometimes follows directly after my participation in sessions, as part of a "living supervision" model. We watch pieces of counselling work, or discuss actual sessions I have participated in. We also include our practicum students whenever that is possible, as it provides supervisory experience for the student, and brings some lovely questions forward in terms of making our work public.

Clinical Counsellors meet monthly with me for direct clinical supervision of their work and to address any training pieces required. This often includes DVDs or live supervision of group or individual sessions. In my publishing and teaching work Peak House continues to be important. I continue to seek consultation and permission from the Executive Director regarding any references to Peak House in publications. My intention is to make public some of the work, competencies, ethics and spirit of Peak House that have been useful for the wider community, and to uphold and contribute to the reputation of this brilliant program.

I am honoured to continue to be part of the Peak House community, and I am grateful for the sustainability and hope that working alongside this dedicated and capable team offers me. I particularly appreciate the input and leadership from both the Executive Director and Program Manager in collaborating to promote training and supervision that is responsive and useful.

Vikki Reynolds

Board of Director's Report

The current reporting year of 2013/14 has been an important one for the Peak House program and for Pacific Youth and Family Services Society, the non-profit society that manages Peak House. In September 2013 the Peak House program celebrated its 25th Anniversary year of providing services to youth and families across BC and this milestone achievement is one that is shared by all of our staff, management, volunteers, and program participants both currently and historically –a very warm and heartfelt thank-you and acknowledgement from the current Board to all who have made this possible in whatever role or form your involvement took.

From the Board perspective, this year has also seen an important milestone in the form of the launch of the first ever PYFSS Strategic Plan, which is envisioned as a 3 year document that will guide decision-making and priority-setting through-out the organization in the coming years. A one-page summary of this plan is available in our Annual Report and will shortly be available on the web-site. A massive thank-you and acknowledgement also goes out to the Board members, staff, community members, funders, and program participants who been part of crafting this document over the years, as we hope to continue to draw on and learn from all of your important input in creating this as a living document that will be useful and relevant over the coming years.

Another key initiative of the Board, spear-headed by Fundraising Committee Chair Christine Smith, has been to continue to develop and expand the capacity of the society to diversify funding and find new tools and techniques with which to engage with community and has met with some notable successes over the year, including but not limited to a key partnership with Clara's Big Ride. A big thank-you to all who have been part of this committee over the year, and in particular to our generous donors and contributors.

It has also been a year of change and of opportunities to develop resiliency and flexibility amongst the Board of Directors itself. At the time of this writing in late August, 2014 we have faced resignations from two past Chairs (Mike Arget and Grant Gardner), Vice Chair (Kate Campbell), and Treasurer (Tina Zhao), as well as long-standing Board member Coral Payne and new member Olivia Kienzel. We have also been extremely fortunate to welcome on board a number of new members – Mike Mannella, Kelly Ngan, and Patrick Grayer. I would like to take this opportunity to extend a very warm "welcome and looking forward to working with you" to Mike, Kelly and Patrick and a very warm "thank-you for all of your work and best of luck in all of future endeavours" to all who have moved on in the last year.

And last but definitely not least, on behalf of the entire Board of Directors, I want to take this opportunity to thank all of the staff, management and volunteers involved in the Peak House program. We acknowledge the dedicated and hard working staff members who work around the clock to support the youth who come to Peak House. This support would not be possible without the dedication shown by James Kelly, Executive Director, and Wendy Wittmack, Program Manager, who have worked diligently to improve the Peak House Program throughout the year and I commend them for their years of service and the success they have brought to our programs.

Finally, I want to congratulate all of the young adults who have attended the Peak House program over the last year and have played a part in creating the supportive environment that allows both you and your peers to commence from our program.

Stephanie Kellington, Acting Chair, On behalf of the Board of Directors, Pacific Youth and Family Services Society

Peak House Team

Board of Directors

Chair

Grant Gardner

Secretary

Christine Smith

General Members

Coral Payne

Olivia Kienzel

Kelly Ngan

Vice Chair

Stephanie Kellington

Treasurer

Mike Mannella



Staff

Management

James Kelly, Executive Director

Wendy Wittmack, Program Manager

Clinical Supervisor

Christine Dennstedt

Vikki Reynolds

Intake & Assessment Counsellor

Jessica Hilton

Administration

Maria Telado

Mental Health & Addiction

Clinical Counsellors

Jamie Whitehead

Bhupie Dulay (part-time)

VSB Teacher

Michelle Davis

Medical Consultant

Dr. N. Baria

Acupuncturist

Satomi Sakata

Nutritionist

Zest Nutrition

Yoga Instructor

Lisa Gibson

Kitchen Coordinator

Kelly Williams

Cook

Yan Ho

Youth Counsellors

Andrea Krakan

Michele Harden

Bryan MacAlpine

Carol Hodge

Geoff Boon

Night Attendants

Laila Biergans

Kathy Miller

On-Call Relief

Joe Pingitore

Lina Silano

Wynne Pruden

Jaime Wittmack

Chris Goodman

Alina Reed

Richard Russell

Geneva Stowell

Audrey Nishiyama

Tera Holmes

Gender Group Facilitator

Steve Sorrenti

Aboriginal Cultural Consultant

Wynne Pruden

Practicum Students

Carol Hodge, VCC

Tera Holmes, UBC

Gagan Kaur, Medicine Hat College

Amy Knowles, VCC

Alexis Baker, UBC

*Reflective of March 31, 2014

Peak House 2013 Highlights



Programming

One of the primary additions to our program this past year includes the development of a new position aimed at better supporting cultural practices and teachings. We are happy to welcome long time youth counsellor Wynne Pruden, into the position of Aboriginal Cultural Consultant.

The second addition is a new educational initiative developed to provide practical health and harm reduction information for youth. Topics as part of our new Healthy Tuesdays programming include safer sex, healthy relationships, gender identity, sexuality, and anti-bullying.

Peak House took an active role this past year to ensure we are working to uphold our commitment to be a safe, welcoming, and inclusive environment for all youth. A full review of our language, forms, intake and referral package, promotional material, and educational content was reviewed and revised to include gender-neutral, respectful and inclusive language.

Staff Training and Development

Investment in the skills and development of our staff team is always a priority at Peak House. This year, some of our targeted training opportunities included: understanding and responding to disordered eating and body image issues, mindfulness and meditation strategies for youth and staff well-being, trauma-informed care, and working with diverse youth populations, with a focus on queer and trans* youth.

Accreditation

Peak House is actively preparing to renew our accreditation through CARF. Board, Management, and staff have all been busy working towards this goal over the last year.

25th
anniversary

education &
training

culture

inclusive

accreditation



Engagement

Relationships are what make the difference. We consistently strive to create, build and maintain positive relationships and partnerships in the community. It is these relationships that help create the type of wrap-around care that best supports the youth we serve. We would like to acknowledge and thank all of our partners in the community who help us to provide exceptional care to the young people in our program.

In addition to our community relationships, we strive to create positive and supportive engagement with families/caregivers and those who care for the youth in our program. Family engagement and support is a top priority at Peak House. We are honoured to be a part of the lives of the youth who walk through our doors. We thank the youth and their families for allowing us to stand beside them in their journey.

Community Education

Peak House continues to be a highly sought-after program for practicum students at all educational levels. Our practicum wait-list consistently exceeds our capacity. This past year, we received practicum requests from across the country. A big thanks to both the students who shared their educational goals with us, and to the staff team for continuing to solidify our position as leaders in the sector by sharing their skills and knowledge freely.

Alumni

Every month, Peak House hosts our regular Alumni Group Meeting. This is an opportunity for former youth to meet, build community and create healthy, supportive relationships with peers. Youth close to completing the program are also invited to attend, as we have found it can be a positive opportunity for peer learning, exchange, mentorship, and community building. Staff lead this group, provide support, and resources and hold group directed discussion topics. Youth often leave the group together to attend a self-help meeting, have coffee or go to the movies.

In addition to our Alumni Group, Peak House honours the wisdom of our alumni by inviting former youth to speak to current residents about their experiences during and after Peak House. Youth are paid an honorarium for their participation. Many youth have let us know the power of being able to give back and make a difference for other young people. The youth in the program report that hearing from alumni is often one of the most powerful experiences during their stay.

Being a provincial resource, we are often not able to connect face to face with youth living outside of the Vancouver area once they complete the program. As a result, we are working toward creating increased opportunities for remote and out-of-area youth to participate in after care groups and support.

knowledge
exchange

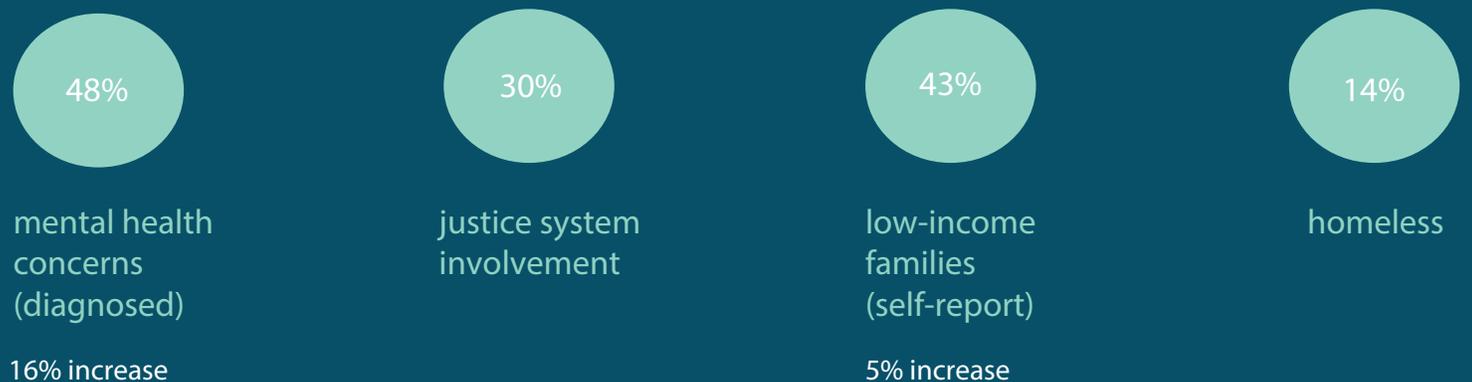
alumni

engagement

family

Peak House Annual Report 2014

Overview

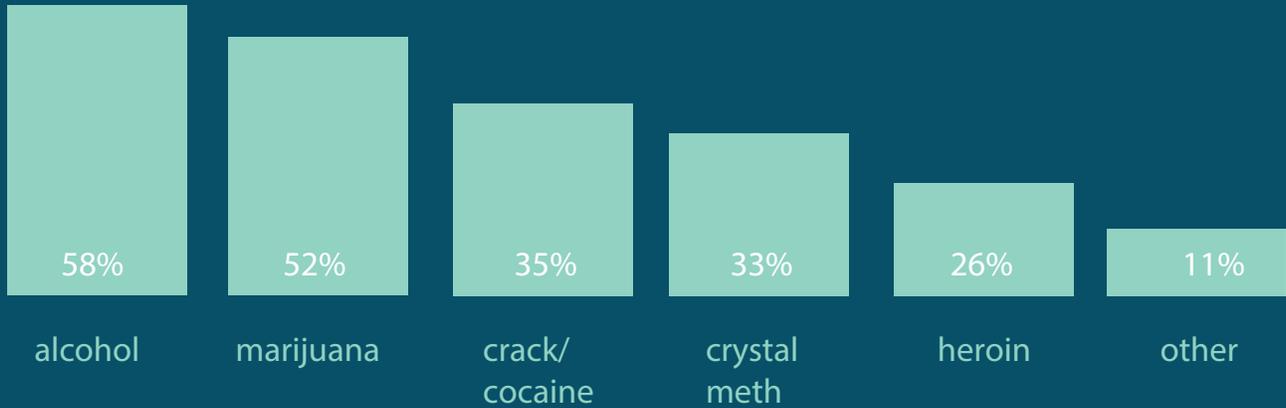


School

The Peak House school program is run in collaboration with the Vancouver School Board. Youth attend school four days per week and report that having the opportunity for a positive school experience while at Peak House has greatly increased their continued and future academic success, as well as their interest in pursuing post-secondary educational options. This year we welcomed our new teacher Michelle!

Supporting BC youth and families to find freedom from problematic substance use.

Substance Use



Poly Drug Use

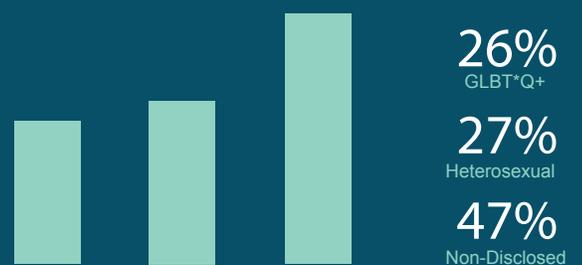
79% of youth self-report using more than one substance on a regular basis.

During the 2013/14 reporting period, alcohol, crack/cocaine, crystal methamphetamine, and heroin have increased in usage and popularity, making these the top drug(s) of choice among youth entering our program.

Gender Identity



Sexual Orientation



fostering success, healing and hope for over 25 years

Peak House

Annual Report 2014

Outcomes

Young people and their families reported an increase in positive outcomes as a result of their involvement with our program.



physical health
emotional/mental health
family/home situation
educational status



criminal justice system involvement
problematic substance use

Testimonials

Below is a selection of the feedback we received from youth during this past year.

“I learned I could have fun sober. I actually laughed real laughs... that was a new high.”

“Group living taught me how to set boundaries and how to have healthy relationships.”

“The structured schedule gave me predictability and a sense of organization. It helped me learn how to function as a human being, something I lost when I was caught up in where to get the next fix and where to sleep.”

“I have tools and feel more self-assured and capable of managing stress.”

“My after care plan is like a bible to me. The safe people in my life know how to help me and it helps me prevent relapse.”

“The graduating ceremony was the most beautiful I have ever experienced.”

..... **mission**

Supporting BC youth and families to find freedom from problematic substance use.

- Youth-empowering
- Strengths-based
- Inclusive
- Collaborative

- Harm reduction
- Family & community cooperation
- Anti-oppression practices
- Staff support

values

approaches

PYFSS Strategic Plan



- 1A** Increase post-care support through the recovery period
- 1B** Seek out more opportunities to connect with youth and families living outside the GVRD
- 1C** Look for opportunities to increase access for youth with multiple barriers to the program
- 1D** Initiate CARF accreditation

- 3A** Enhance current workplace culture, including remaining competitive with remuneration
- 3B** Obtain sustainable resources to hire additional administrative support
- 3C** Continue to build strong board membership for the society

- 2A** Incorporate online fundraising activities into on-going initiatives
- 2B** Increase on-line visibility through search-engine optimization
- 2C** Increase partnerships/events/campaigns with local business, organizations, & individuals



Thank You!



On behalf of the entire Peak House team, we would like to thank our funders, donors, and community partners. Together, we have supported BC youth and their families for 26 years.

We would like to acknowledge the strength and wisdom of the young people and their families for their courage to make, support and maintain the profound changes and growth we witness every day.

As a team, we are proud to be an award-winning program, delivering innovative and forward thinking services to help better the lives of youth, families, and our community.

