



Creating hope, Building futures & Changing lives Downtown Eastside Residents take the steps to S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

Walking through the streets of Vancouver's Downtown Eastside you will find a dense neighbourhood of desperate people living in unimaginable conditions. Many of its residents suffering from addiction problems, mental illness, disabilities or those who simply do not have the means to affordable housing or a decent meal. There are shelters and soup kitchens but not enough to support the growing population of homeless and impoverished living in the Downtown Eastside. Those wishing to change their life look to the support of the COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (CAP) a service provided by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. a not for profit agency and one of British Columbia's largest social service providers funded by the Ministry of Housing and Social Development (MHSD).

S.U.C.C.E.S.S provides multi-barriered clients living in the Downtown Eastside with services to improve their quality of life and provide resources within their community. Services are flexible and tailored to the needs of each individual client. Services focus on personal planning, life-skills training and counselling, as well as advocacy support, helping clients to fill out applications for income supports,



and working on their behalf to connect them with other services they need in the community, such as mental health, housing, drug or alcohol treatment, legal aid, and child care & family services. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.'s caring and compassionate counsellors' develop an individualized creative program model to meet the needs of each client through informal art therapy and interactive activities.

Willis, a current resident of the Downtown Eastside, suffered a brain injury which left him without work and no place to live sending him spiralling into deep depression. For 17 years Willis lived on Income Assistance and struggled daily with depression and feelings of anger. When Willis learned about the CAP program he enrolled immediately and began counselling with the caring and professionally trained staff at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. He was provided a bus pass, clothing and a volunteer opportunity with Quest Food Exchange where he helped staff in exchange for food vouchers. Although Willis was now on his feet and getting by he was still in need of an extra helping hand for his best friend Fester, his dog. The compassionate people at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. connected him with Mission Possible where he volunteers in exchange for pet food. With advocate support, both Willis and Fester have found a new home. Willis says "My attitude has shifted totally for the good. I don't get mad anymore. I think of others and not just myself now." Willis also says "CAP motivated me and encouraged me and got me in the mode to establish a routine, build stamina through increased community volunteer work." Willis now receives a \$100 subsidy from MHSD for his volunteer work and has signed up as kitchen help with Carnegie Community Service Centre in the Downtown Eastside.

Without the help from the staff at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and their personalized programs Willis might have been one of the many faces in the Downtown Eastside whose eyes seem vacant with only visions of hopelessness. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.'s social services and advocacy for the Downtown Eastside residents proves to be a needed step in the right direction of building bridges for those who do not have the tools to do so on their own.

The Downtown Eastside, the poorest demographic in Canada despite efforts from both provincial and federal government to revitalize its streets and rehabilitate those living there, remains an area riddled with needles, garbage and desperate people who turn to drugs and crime to survive. Tom is a resident who was moving from hotel to hotel in order to avoid drug dealers and addicts but due to his dire financial situation and lack of self worth he thought he had no options. But Tom's life took a turn for the better when he enrolled in the CAP program. There Tom was able to discover that he did have skills, the skills of communication. Through endless talks with counsellors at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. Tom was encouraged to believe in his abilities and gave him the self confidence and tools to apply for a job with a Property Management Company. Tom was hired as a Front Desk Clerk at a Downtown Eastside hotel where his duties include building maintenance and security. Tom is most proud of his people skills that allow him to act as a friendly mediator for disgruntled tenants. Tom thanks the S.U.C.C.E.S.S. program for "getting him on the right track" and adds, "You helped me to realize I am a people person. The improvement I am experiencing couldn't be better!" Today Tom lives in a nice place where the rent is reasonable and the tenants are friendly.



With the implementation of social housing and programs designed to assist those living in the Downtown Eastside by both the provincial and federal government many still struggle to survive. The CAP program provided by S.U.C.C.E.S.S. is a much needed service whose core values of caring, openness, respect, integrity, inclusiveness and integration are clearly reflected in their programs which build bridges, harvest diversity and foster integration through service and advocacy. The staff at S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and the CAP program as well as the committed participants helps to improve and create harmony within their community. As Tung Chan, CEO of S.U.C.C.E.S.S. says, “It is due to the community spirit of CARING, SHARING & SERVING that we have accomplished so much.”

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