



Lookout Emergency Aid Society Residential Programs 2008-2009

Lookout provides a range of housing to adults, from highly supported transitional housing to independent housing with supports. Our goal is to assist tenants in achieving their highest possible level of independence and self-sufficiency. Most of our folks live with disabilities, often multiple disabilities. Residents have the opportunity to move within the range of housing services as their needs and abilities change. All of Lookout's housing is dedicated to local residents in the community in which the housing is located.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING PROGRAM

Lookout's Transitional Housing Program provides longer-term (e.g. up to 2-3 years) for chronically homeless individuals who require higher levels of assistance over a sustaining period to bring a greater level of stability to their lives. The program specifically targets those having few, if any, housing alternatives – unable to meet their own basic needs and not able/willing to access communal living options. Staff provide support, direction and assistance to tenants, enabling them to develop the skills they need to increase their health and stability, and to work towards greater independence. Transitional housing bridges people into permanent housing solutions which meet the needs of the individual. Waitlists are long, and finding places for people to move to is an issue: there is not enough housing, particularly with appropriate supports, that is affordable for people to move into!

What makes Transitional Housing work?

It starts the moment a tenant moves in: developing a plan, identifying goals, and working towards independence!

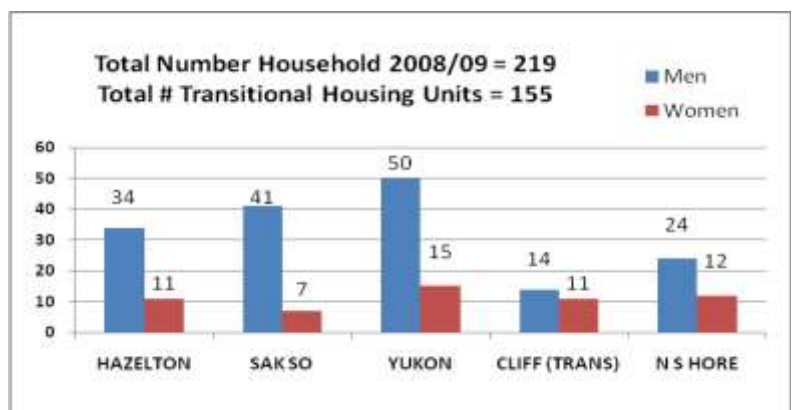
Key initial issues people face: inability to manage their increasingly complicated medication regimes. Budgeting fixed low incomes to stretch to the end of each month. Have YOU ever tried to balance a fixed amount for an entire month?

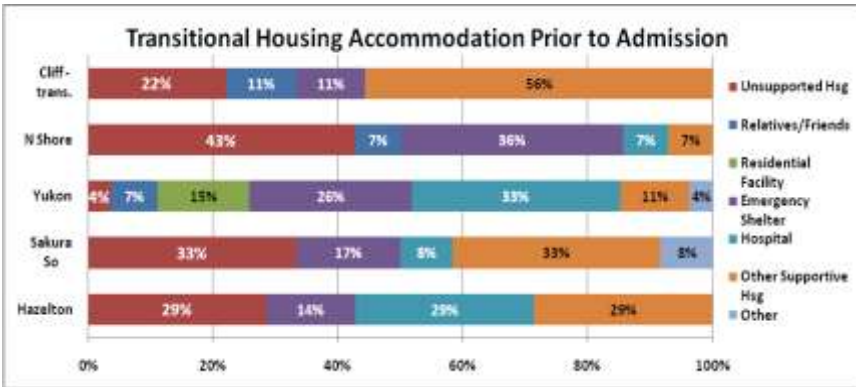
People applying for transitional housing are seeking assistance with a number of issues that cause chaos and an unsettled lifestyle.

They identify issues that put them at risk of future homelessness, and work towards managing or overcoming these issues. For instance, challenging behaviour is a common issue: it can range from serious personal hygiene or room cleanliness issues (including collectors), or can be a threatening demeanor. The bottom line is that people cannot put others or the building(s) at risk. Many move in with little self-esteem and feeling hopeless. This does not encourage improved social or lifeskills, one of the main barriers against them successfully managing their 'monkeys'.

LOOKOUT'S TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

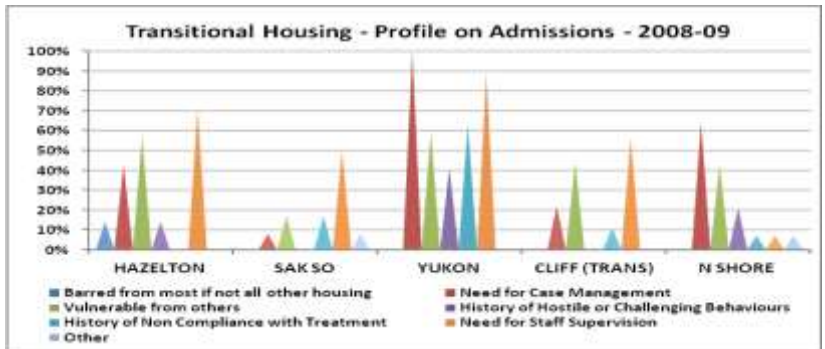
Cliff Block, New Westminster	16
North Shore Housing, North Vancouver	25
Yukon Housing, Vancouver	37
Sakura So Residence, Vancouver	38
Hazelton Residence (<i>licensed</i>) Vancouver	39
TOTAL	155



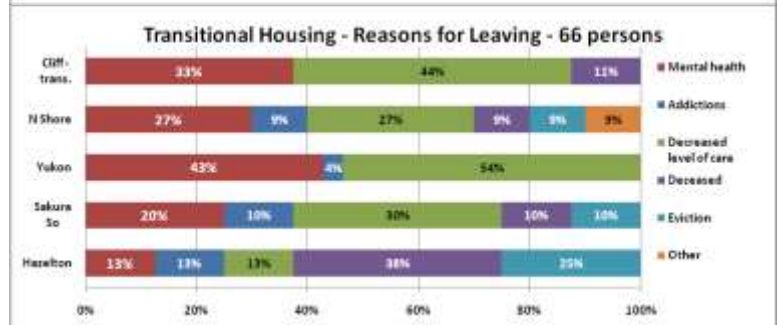
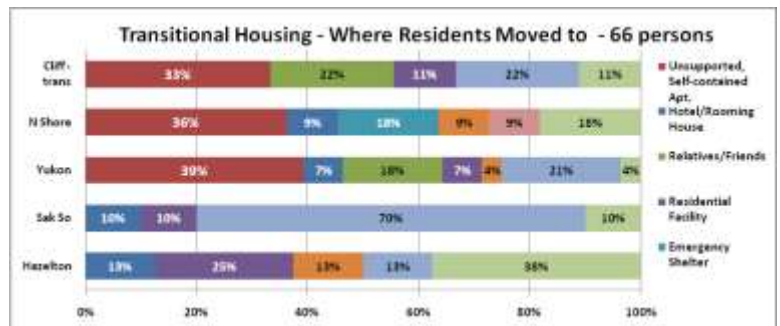
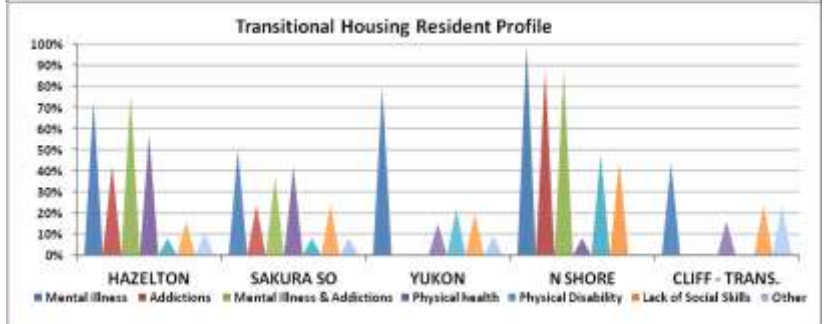


Each of the housing resources has their own tenant selection committee to best respond to local needs and to balance current tenants with new to ensure that the staffing resources are not overstretched. Residents frequently have overlapping challenges they are dealing with, as demonstrated by the following charts. Mental illness and addictions remain by far the major reason that people are repeatedly homeless, and needing support to change behaviours that put them at risk of future homelessness.

During their time within the transitional housing, residents work towards their own goals, with the assistance and support of Tenant Support Workers (TSW). The goals could be as simple as finding housing that is affordable and suitable to their lifestyle. Or it can be re-learning skills such as budgeting, nutrition, cooking skills, anger management, medication handling, problem-solving, shopping skills, etc. Some get involved in vocational training and volunteerism, others take educational courses. However, often they recognize that they need support to successfully maintain a stable living environment.



66 individuals left Lookout's transitional housing this year. The greatest barrier for people moving is the lack of affordable housing, particularly housing that is supported. However, **23 (35%)** who left transitioned to independent housing, including **8%** who moved to SRA's. This primarily is through a fast track system in place with BC Housing. Another **16 (24%)** went to supported housing, while **7 (11%)** went into care facilities as they needed permanent supports to cover an increased level of care and a further **3 (5%)** were hospitalized, **1 (2%)** transitioned to rehab program. **7 (11%)** people moved in with family/friends. Of these placements, primary health needs were: **3 (5%)** physical health, **21 (32%)** mental health and **4 (6%)** lived with addictions. **26 (39%)** had a decreased need for support. **1 (2%)** individuals went to other venues, and **1** left the area. Sadly, **6 (9%)** individuals died during their tenancy. The deaths are difficult, we can only take solace from our satisfaction surveys which indicate that their life ended when they were more stable and happier than before.



Individual housing reports follow, by the staff/managers of the various housing.

Hazelton Residence

The 39-unit Hazelton Residence, located on the second and third floors above the Downtown Shelter, provides the highest level of support amongst the residential programs. Residents have their own secure room but share washrooms; most choose to take their meals in the downstairs dining room.

The mandate of the Hazelton Residence is to provide housing for adults who call the Downtown Eastside their home community, who have few, if any, other housing options, who have histories of homelessness, and who require 24 hour supervision and some assistance with daily living. Five rooms are designated to folks who are living with HIV/AIDS.

Officially considered as transitional housing, the Hazelton has many residents that are doing as well as they can and they are unlikely to move to more independence. Tenants usually need the fine balance between their own individual room and independence, and the shared services and support they receive. They do not 'fit' within traditional care models. Those who do leave often move because they require additional care than the Hazelton can offer. Turnover this year was somewhat higher than the previous year for a variety of reasons – needing increased or decreased care, eviction for violence and one resident who chose to leave for his own reasons. **8** individuals left during the course of the year.

A consistent focus for the Hazelton program continues to be supporting tenants in attending appointments with physicians and mental health workers and in helping tenants follow through with lab tests and medical procedures. Many of our residents are living with serious health issues and need the support of staff to cope with complex medication regimes and their side effects, to attend medical procedures that are at times invasive and frightening, and to attend to regular blood tests and X-rays.

With the upgrade in the tenant lounge, thanks to a donation from the family of a former tenant, tenants are enjoying their own space to watch TV and socialize together. A number of tenants have also been able to budget their money to install and pay for cablevision in their room, increasing their independence and enhancing their living space.

The Hazelton Residence designates **5** rooms to folks who are living with HIV/AIDS, however, we have always had many more than five living with HIV/AIDS in the building and most of our residents live at high risk of infection with HIV. This year we had **15** individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Education and harm reduction are critical components of the program. With information, residents will make healthier choices. With a philosophy of harm reduction, support is client focused, recognizing that the resident is the expert on their own life. When residents know that staff are not judging their life choices, residents are able to be honest in discussing issues and concerns with staff.

Five people left the Hazelton this year, while **three** others passed away. **Two (25%)** of the **five** were evicted because of violence or serious threats of violence and were placed in shelters. As everywhere at Lookout, eviction is a very serious and rarely used. However, when the risk is high to the person or to others, we need to find different accommodations and a better way to meet their needs. Others moved into more independent housing or other supported housing.

Thanks again this year go to Shirley Kolb, a talented artist, who is volunteering her time to work with residents, giving them the opportunity to try different styles of painting. Residents look forward to her weekly Tuesday visits and missed her when she was unable to come for a period of time for personal reasons. MDS Metro Laboratory Services continues to come into the building on a regular basis to hold blood work clinics, enabling those residents who would not normally follow through with blood testing to get their testing done in a timely fashion. The Hazelton continues to benefit from the contributions of practicum students, particularly those from the Stenberg College Practical Nursing Program, who have put on a number of interesting and relevant health workshops for residents.

Thanks go to our resident volunteers who are doing much hard work, assisting cooks and maintenance staff. As always, we are grateful for the contribution of Dr Sue Burgess and community nurses Susan Giles and Evanna Brennan and their team for all the assistance they provide and the excellent and compassionate care for our residents.

Sakura So Residence

The Sakura So Residence is a 38 unit heritage rooming house purchased in 2001 as transitional housing for adults, thanks to a grant from the federal government's Homeless Initiative (Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative). Like all of Lookout's programs, the Sakura So is for adults who have histories of homelessness and who need support to develop the skills needed to be successful in maintaining permanent housing. These housing units, located above retail stores, have cooking facilities and the washrooms are shared. Nine of the 38 units are double rooms. There is an elevator, making the building a good option for some of the many residents of the Downtown Eastside who, due to health issues, have difficulties managing the flights of stairs so common in most rooming houses and SRO's. The building also boasts a roof patio, offering a superb view of downtown and the North Shore mountains and is a cool place to relax on a hot night.

As the program is transitional, roughly **30%** of the residents moved in during the year. Residents moving in came from a variety of sources, the majority coming from hotels/rooming houses or other supported housing. Those coming from supported housing were actually making the move towards independence as they were leaving residences with higher levels of care. **One** tenant was able to make the move back to Ontario to re-unite with family after 17 years apart.

There remains only **1** Japanese resident from the days prior to 2001 when the building was owned by a Japanese society. Today the building and program are well-known for providing safe and supported housing for transgendered people or for folks beginning their transition from male to female or female to male. The community is tolerant and accepting and folks in transition feel comfortable being themselves. Residents simply accept their neighbours as they present themselves to be. There is a very evident sense of community overall in the building as residents have developed friendships, "hang out" in the lounge together and watch out for each other. Sakura so is also a very pet-friendly community as many of our residents enjoy the companionship of cats and dogs.

Thanks to continued funding from Vancouver Coastal Health, our tenant support worker with a focus on life skills continues to be a part of the program offered. The life skills worker coordinates a weekly meal on Tuesday for residents with their assistance – the small size of the kitchen makes having too many residents in the kitchen at once a challenge. Tenants, with the assistance of the weekend staff, put on a pancake breakfast on Sundays. Two-thirds of the residents attend the weekly dinner; about half come for the pancake breakfast. The worker also takes folks shopping and supports tenants as they attend medical appointments. With the prevalence of bedbug infestations in the Downtown Eastside, a major focus of life skills continues to be teaching residents how to reduce to risk of infestations and prepare for pest control.

This year and the previous year, Sakura So, like the Ross Residence, has had the services of Vancouver Coastal Health's Clinical Housing Team, a team composed of a coordinator, nurses, a nurse-practitioner, social work/case management worker, and most recently, a doctor and health care workers. The intent of the team is to bring primary health care services to people who would not normally access those services. In the case of the Sakura So residents, chaotic lifestyles and mental health and addiction issues get in the way of consistently accessing primary care due to long waits at clinics and health issues requiring complex medical interventions. The team provides a weekly nursing clinic at Sakura So along with additional visits as needed, assistance to residents in following through with appointments, advocacy, and facilitating admissions to hospitals.

This past year has seen the start of new building activities and the continuation of others. Volunteers have assisted us in many ways. Bread making has been a hit. Our volunteer haircutter gets a huge turnout every time he comes; he even has tenants cutting hair too. A weekly Talking Circle has begun this year and tenants have learned to be open and respectful as others share their stories. Nursing students from Langara put on a workshop about hand washing. Movie nights, BBQ's on the roof, the monthly birthday party, and decorating the lounge for Christmas and other special times provide time for socialization and fun.



Yukon Transitional Housing

Yukon Housing has 37 self-contained housing units located above a 24 hour emergency shelter. As with the Hazelton, this co-existence allows the shelter's overnight staff to provide emergency back up for the tenants when the Tenant Support Workers are off duty.

While residency is up to two years, exceptions can be made after re-evaluation of the resident's case plan indicates further support and assistance is still required to make people successful in transitioning to permanent housing. Yukon has had great success working with the residents to set goals in a case plan, assess and review progress and then set new goals striving to achieve a greater level of independence.

The Transitional Housing team provided housing to **65** individuals, of whom **50 (77%)** were male and **15 (23%)** were female. This translates to a turnover of a whopping **28** units this year alone! Intakes came largely from hospitals and emergency shelters (**60%**). We continue to see a large number of residents living with the challenges of mental illness (**50%**) and lack of social skills (**33%**), while at the same time a reduced intake of those with physical disabilities (**3%**), addictions (**13%**) and, surprisingly, (**0%**) dual diagnosis for new intakes.

For the **28** residents that moved out this year, an astonishing **45%** moved either into independent living or to another permanent residential housing facility. **21%** moved on to other permanent supportive housing centres that will continue to meet their needs. This is a great success for our residents and the program, a true indication that the transitional housing program has addressed permanent housing needs. For at least **70%** of the residents, the individual cycle of homelessness was stopped. **13** people successfully moved into unsupportive independent housing, **2** people moved into a permanent residential facility, **6** moved into other long term supportive housing, while **1** was hospitalized. Two went to family.

Tenants meet with Tenant Support Workers upon intake and every **2-3** months to set goals and to review case plans. The ability to manage medications and finances is very important in successful transition into more independent living. This year **14** people were taught to manage finances, while **31** people were newly taught to manage their own medications.

Tenants access programs in the community such as Jobwave, THEO, a cooking school and a UBC ESL program. Additional support comes from Quest, Mosaic, SUCCESS, Gastown Vocational, and Broadway Youth Resource Centre. A new initiative this year is the introduction of life skills workshops on conflict resolution, managing stress, and goal setting, provided by the students from Rhodes College.

At any given time this year, there were **26** people working part time in various businesses including restaurants, retail, construction, Vancouver City, florist, theatre, and the Coast work program. On average **22** people volunteered in the community and **28** new individuals volunteered in our in-house volunteering program. That's **92%** of tenants who contributed many hours inside the program! A popular option that tenants choose is the Tenant Advisory Committee with **4** members on the committee at any given time. Membership fluctuates greatly as people move on to other housing. During the **9** tenant advisory meetings held this year, issues such as getting mailboxes and payphones, completing housing applications, and preparing income tax returns were discussed. Our satisfaction surveys reflect that **95%** of residents feel more satisfied with their life and **89%** feel their physical and mental health has improved while living in Yukon's transitional housing.

Yukon Transitional Housing is supported by our Tenant Selection Committee that consists of community organizations (including Midtown Mental Health, Community Transition Team and Lookout Outreach) who lend expertise and guidance. This creates accountability and allows for a broad spectrum of people accepted as tenants into the transitional program.

Yukon maintains close working relationships with many community agencies to discuss issues on the changing face of Mount Pleasant and the growing homeless population in this area. To that end, tenants serve in an advisory role to Lookout's new housing project First Place now in early stages of construction at First and Main. Tenants have discussed the environmental sustainability, building and studio unit design, possible programs and participation in the building operations. They provide valuable advice that helps Lookout create permanent homes that work for people who have been homeless.

Cliff Block, New Westminster

The Cliff Block, a heritage building in New Westminster, has 16 units of transitional housing co-located with 7 units of supportive permanent housing and an Outreach Program. As most tenants live with disabilities, often multiple disabilities, residents have the opportunity to move within the range of services as their needs and abilities change.

This year Cliff transitional housing was home for **25** individuals. Our occupancy rate continues to be 100% as it has been since opening. **44%** (48% last year) of the residents are women vs. Lookout's norm of 25%. **44%** live with mental illness, often complicated by medical issues (**16%**). **12%** of the mentally ill also cope with addiction. Many have self identified a lack of social skills as something they want to work on, knowing these will lead them to greater independence. Some are learning better ways to communicate. Violence is something that many homeless or homeless at risk individuals experience, and tenants tell us that the safety of the Cliff Block is one of the most important things that Lookout is able to provide to them.



This year we were able to celebrate **9 (56%)** people moving in/out. All **9** had stayed at the Cliff Block for 2 or more years. One person had been at the Cliff for more than 4 years. **3 (33%)** of the tenants moved to independent affordable housing, **3 (33%)** transferred into other supported housing/services and **2** moved in with family or friends.

The Cliff Block continues to be busy with weekly evening meetings of **Dual Diagnosis Anonymous** on Thursdays, **Dual Recovery Anonymous** on Tuesday and **N.A. meeting for the deaf** on Mondays.

The New Westminster School District's Transitional Community Adult – Based Education Service continues to provide educational services to Cliff residents who show an interest in working toward high school completion. The **Celebrate Wellness Program\Life Skills\Cooking Skills Group**, meets on the weekend and teaches involved tenants the basics around wellness, meditation, relaxation techniques and how to have a nutritious diet. We also have a program that helps folks learn how to prepare a healthy meal.

This last year found us more involved in the community than ever before. We know that networking and building relationships are vital as we continue to branch out into the community and participate in a number of local initiatives, including: New Westminster Homelessness Coalition, Raising the Roof and Toque Tuesday, the Interagency Council, the Business Improvement Society, and the City of Burnaby's Homelessness Task Force.

Our main challenges continue to be trying to connect people with needs to community services and the continual education on issues surrounding mental illness and homelessness, building on our relationships with local community groups, finding appropriate affordable housing with supports for tenants ready to move on from Transitional housing. Our dreams are for the creation of a centralized Resource Center as well as a Walk in clinic for street entrenched citizens who have no health care coverage or feel uncomfortable with existing medical facilities.

WHAT DO TENANTS SAY?

"You guys have helped me find a new way of living"

"I feel like I'm home for the first time in my life"

"I don't feel judged"

Special thanks go to the following: Starbucks, Safeway, TELUS. Our volunteers for their heart-felt donation of time and effort. **Our tenants** for taking a pro-active role in the building and ensuring that it continues to be a warm, comfortable and inviting space for friends and guests. **Acknowledgements to:** New West Homelessness Coalition, the Interagency Committee, New West Mental Health, CRESST, Fraserside, Friendship House, New West Family Place, City of New West, B.C. Housing, New West Police, Purpose Society, Fraserdale Shelter, AWRE, United Food & Commercial Workers Local 247, Royal Columbian Hospital, Hospital Admission Diversion Team (HAD) Seniors Services, New West BIA, Assertive Community Management Team, CMHA, Union Gospel, St. Barnabas Church, St. Aidans Church, Holy Trinity Cathedral, Salvation Army, Genesis Society, Youth Employment Station, MEIA, New Westminster School District 40, New Westminster Interagency Committee.

North Shore Housing, North Vancouver

In April of 2005, we opened our North Shore Residence, providing 25 units of housing for chronically homeless North Shore residents who require higher levels of assistance over a sustaining period to bring a greater level of stability to their lives. The program specifically targets those having few, if any, housing alternatives, unable to meet their own basic needs and not able to access communal living options. Support workers provide direction and assistance to tenants, enabling them to develop the skills they need to increase their health and stability, and to work towards greater independence. The aim of supported transitional housing is to bridge people into permanent housing solutions that meet the needs of the individual. The bridge that we provide is comprised of consciousness raising, skill development, barrier identification and problem solving, social integration, and the healing effects of a tenant-centred, non-judgmental, and caring environment.

The demand for supported housing on the North Shore is apparent with our **100%** occupancy rate since opening, and a waitlist nearing **200** North Shore applicants. Homelessness is no longer necessarily the consequence of a single issue such as mental health or addiction. Increasing numbers of people find themselves in that precarious socio-economic zone where daily attention is needed to stave off economic consequences that could result in the loss of housing. Previously hard-working and conscientious individuals, after a string of unforeseen events, suddenly find themselves cut adrift and marginalized from the very community they were once part of. These events can be a loss of employment, a broken relationship, family tragedy, long-term illness or misdiagnosis, or a culmination of pressure, anxiety and feelings of hopelessness resulting from these seemingly uncontrollable crises. With few resources and the most basic of social benefits - equal at most to 55% of the Poverty Threshold income, marginalization quickly becomes chronic and the resultant stress and loss of direction overwhelming. This is particularly so when the community does not recognize the poor or the needs of men and women who suffer from situational or systemic mental and physical barriers to housing.

*"Lookout saved my life."
Jeff S.*

The North Shore Transitional Housing offers a two year program which addresses core issues around the loss of housing, while supporting and attending to the ongoing resolution of mental, emotional or physical impediments to well-being. The program specifically targets North Shore residents on low, fixed incomes, who have few, if any, housing alternatives, unable to meet their own basic needs and not able or willing to access communal living options.



Tenant Support Workers provide direction and assistance to tenants, enabling them to develop necessary skills needed to increase their health and stability, enabling them to work toward greater independence. The aim of supported Transitional Housing is to bridge people into lifestyle and permanent housing solutions that meet the individual's needs. The bridge that we provide is comprised of consciousness raising, strengths assessment, skill development, barrier identification and problem solving, community integration, and the healing effects of a tenant-centred, non-

judgmental, and caring environment. Emphasis is placed on forming trusting relationships with the tenants and working with them toward their goals. We try to approach tenant's needs from a creative perspective.

Our demographic continues to shift with changing demands. As a result, more than **50%** of our tenants are between the ages of **45** and **64**. We are cognisant of the needs of this demographic as we interview for vacancies. Directly related to this age anomaly is the level of care required for some applying for housing. Our resources, both human and physical, narrowly define the level of care we can provide those with significant need.

Even more significant is the cultural and ethnic diversity we celebrate. At present we have four non-status First Nations residents, one of which is Métis. We have **4** Francophone residents, **2** of Asian descent and **1** Hispanic; which makes for interesting conversations around the television!

5 residents are dealing with addiction issues, 7 have diagnosed psychiatric issues, 5 have Concurrent disorders, 4 are dealing with physical conditions, 2 lack basic social skills; while 14 residents are on medication, with only 4 of these are assisted by staff, the others have been taught to self manage.

In the past year, tenants from the housing program volunteered 800+ hours towards the running and upkeep of the North Shore Housing Centre, working in the shelter laundry, clothing rooms, and kitchen, and in maintaining common areas and running social programs, such as movie nights and barbecues for residents. In recent months, tenants have themselves formed a tenant-helping-tenant group to make coffee and socialize daily, as well as plan special events.

This year we started a pilot project matching selected tenants with special needs, Feral cats from VOKRA and Maverick Cat Coalition. These cats required care, while the selected tenants usually needed something to care about. The result has been rewarding for all – a far bigger success than anyone thought.

Funding limitations force us to find innovative ways to fulfill program mandates such as utilizing partnerships like practicum students from local colleges and volunteers from the community. We greatly value their contribution to the tenants' well-being. This year we had Social work students from UBC and exchange students from Denmark.

Monthly Tenant Meetings gave us direction and kept us informed of ongoing issues while allowing tenants to build their community through problem solving and resolution. Now tenants try to resolve issues with critical thinking and bring suggestions to the TSW for cooperative solutions

Lookout's North Shore Transitional Housing is part of a network, within the North Vancouver and Metro Vancouver communities, of social service, health, and non-profit organizations. We continue to form and maintain trusting relationships within this network and those we house, providing the guidance, support, and non-judgemental perspective necessary to foster growth and stability, and nurture the *bridge* to community integration and a more independent life.

Currently, the North Shore Housing is home to: 7 women and 18 men. Of these 25 persons, 22 are receiving Persons With Disability (PWD) benefits from the Ministry; 1 is on Single Employable benefits - waiting for PWD approval; 1 is on pension; while 1 tenant has found part-time employment and plans to move.

IN the past year, 11 individuals left the program. Several moved into subsidized, independent housing such as the Lion's Capilano, John Howard Society, ANAF, and others. At least two moved with SAFER subsidies, and others found their own appropriate independent housing. Only one returned to the Shelter system.

Many of these placements were made possible because of our relationship with BC Housing's *Health Services Department*, as part of the continuum of care model currently in place among health service organizations to support individuals at risk.

We are saddened at the disappearance of one of our tenants and maintain contact with his family.

North Shore Transitional Housing has embarked on a dynamic and exciting challenge in which staff and tenants work together to form the kind of social unit all of us aspire to. This approach has given our tenants a firmer footing when they go looking for independent housing in what seems to be an ever tightening marketplace.

Our tenants see themselves as part of their own collective solution to North Shore Housing issues.

"My life had changed so drastically and I had nowhere. Being here has helped to bring back my confidence and self esteem. It's like being in a family."

James G.