

## 2020 HIGHLIGHTS

Prior to the pandemic, the Downtown Eastside Seniors Centre served approximately 60 to 80 seniors per day: a place where they can leave their cramped living quarters, enjoy an affordable hot nourishing meal and have a chance to sit down, talk, connect, socialize and develop friendships.

Our Centre closed in March to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. We have discontinued in-person activities and focused on:

- providing low-cost meals to isolated seniors with barriers to food access,
- checking in with seniors by phone or through their building managers; and
- working with our Outreach Staff and volunteers to deliver hot meals and food hampers to needy seniors.

Our members appreciate the support and care we offered during the pandemic. Our service helps meet their physical needs and reduce their anxiety and loneliness.

We drafted a safety plan for re-opening our Centre with consulting support from Vantage Point and the City of Vancouver to ensure the safety of our members, volunteers and staff. Subject to the government's health and safety updates, our Centre can be re-opened. Structured programming will be launched in phases to ensure safety for all.

Earlier in the year, the Faculty of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the University of British Columbia has recognized and identified our Seniors Centre as a teaching site with their experiential education program.

For the convenience of our donors, we have launched our new website to accept online donations (<http://vsms.ca>).



DONATION OF RICE FROM JEAN IP FOUNDATION

## The Continental Seniors Centre

This year, the Continental Seniors Centre was also greatly impacted by the pandemic. The closure of the Centre in early March led to a temporary suspension of our programs and services. As we know, seniors are more susceptible to this virus. Therefore, protecting our members by eliminating any chance of transmission is our priority. Shortly after the closure, we started a telephone outreach program. Through this program, we learn of our members' needs and concerns. We try to address these issues and provide emotional support.

Wayne is a resident in the New Continental and has been a member of the Seniors Centre for many years. Coming to the Centre used to be part of his daily routine. To him, the Centre was a safe space where he could make a lot of friends and socialize. When the Centre was closed, seniors had to isolate themselves at home. However, Wayne stepped out to support other seniors during this critical time.

From hospital visits to home delivery and telephone calls, Wayne has never stopped caring for his friends and neighbours during this difficult time. In Wayne's heart, we see community spirit.



WAYNE SHOWING OFF HIS PRIZE – A GIFT CARD



## Downtown Eastside Project

This year has certainly been a struggle for everyone, and as we spend time over the holidays with our loved ones, I'm reminded of the people who are not as fortunate to have their family nearby. In the Downtown Eastside, we've been faithfully assisting seniors who lack their own support network, especially with providing continued food security. Since March we have provided over 800 bags of groceries to seniors in need, allowing them to wait out this pandemic as long as it takes. There is a deep need in this neighborhood, and we're committed to filling

that need and supporting our community as long as is necessary with our time, our energy, and our love. Please remember to support your own community during this Christmas season with your time, your energy, and your love. Because no-one deserves to be alone.

Happy holidays and best wishes,  
Caleb Nakasaki, Coordinator



SORTING OF PERISHABLE FOOD TO BE DISPATCHED TO SENIORS

## Downtown South Project

Due to the impact of the pandemic this year, our outreach programs such as coffee sessions and community kitchens in SRO hotels were suspended. During the lockdown, the need for free and low-cost food surged in our community. Therefore, our team of volunteers took a leadership role in delivering food to the door of each SRO hotel. The team took part in the whole operation and planning, including preparing the hampers for delivery.

Doug and Darlene were volunteers who had hosted coffee sessions in SROs. Noting the shortage of volunteers, they stepped in to facilitate food delivery. From their confident smiles and dedication, our community has continued to demonstrate resilience.

## Chinese Outreach Project

Responding to the community needs during the pandemic, Downtown Eastside Seniors Center and the Neighbourhood Helper Outreach Projects have made a concerted effort to keep the low-income seniors in Downtown Eastside safe and healthy at home. Subsidized meals and free groceries are delivered to the vulnerable seniors at their doorstep. Although we are able to address their physical needs, COVID-19 has also affected their mental health, and made them fearful of racial discrimination. Helping seniors to release some stress and lift their spirit, we have captured the opportunity to celebrate the Moon Festival (Chinese thanksgiving) with over 500 seniors, bringing them music performance and festive food, in partnership with the Carnegie Community Center. We are thankful that we are able to continually serve the seniors during this critical time, and are grateful that so far none of the seniors has become infected with COVID-19.



CHINESE SENIORS ENJOYING MUSIC CONCERT DURING MOON FESTIVAL CELEBRATION BY PRACTISING SOCIAL DISTANCING



DOUG AND DARLENE DELIVERING FOOD HAMPERS

## Christmas is coming: Please help!



Due to the pandemic, we will not be able to host any gathering in Christmas. Your donation will not only enable us to purchase small gifts for shut in seniors but also provide support for all our programs.

## THANKS TO OUR 2020 FUNDING PARTNERS:

City of Vancouver, Vancouver Coastal Health, The Province of British Columbia, United Way of the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Fraser Port Authority, Face the World Foundation, Central City Foundation, Wheeler Family Foundation, Rennie Foundation, and you - our loyal individual supporters.