



UNION
GOSPEL
MISSION

ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020
80TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION

HERE NO MATTER WHAT

DEMONSTRATING *the Love* OF CHRIST
UNION GOSPEL MISSION *is* DETERMINED
TO TRANSFORM COMMUNITIES BY OVERCOMING
POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS & ADDICTION
ONE *Life* AT A TIME

Since Union Gospel Mission was founded in 1940, we've faced many crises, like the aftermath of the Great Depression, the legacy of Expo '86, the closure of Riverview Hospital—and the global pandemic, racial injustices, and economic challenges of 2020.

Through the storms, the compassion of donors like you has never failed, and UGM has endured to help people persevere toward renewed life.

Because of you, UGM is still here 80 years later, *feeding hope and changing lives.*

UGM IS HERE NO MATTER WHAT

A historical black and white photograph of a city street, likely Vancouver in the 1940s. The street is lined with multi-story buildings. In the foreground, a streetcar is visible, with the name "F. Golden" and "Vancouver" partially legible on its side. The overall scene depicts a busy urban environment.

1940

THE AFTERMATH OF THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In a time marked by job insecurity, economic turmoil, and the rise of alcohol addiction, Union Gospel Mission was born to provide people in Vancouver hope and compassion.

Every day, our first location at 10 Powell Street served 60 hot, hearty meals, provided six safe shelter beds off the streets, and offered a loving chapel service to those in need.

UGM's humble beginnings were made possible by the fervour and faith of founder Bob Stacey, and the incredible fundraising and volunteer efforts of local churches and the community.

In other words, deeply caring people like you were heartbroken by the crises around them—and determined to help bring forth transformation.



Photo: Frank Gowen, City of Vancouver Archives



Photo: Ernie H. Reksten, City of Vancouver Archives



1986

THE LEGACY OF EXPO '86

To make room for the influx of Expo 86 tourists, over 1,000 residents in single room occupancy hotels were immediately evicted from their long-term homes, and left scrambling to lower-quality hotels, shelters, or the streets.

This only foreshadowed how vulnerable low-income people would become in Vancouver. After the World Fair, the city underwent rapid development and gentrification projects that swept hundreds of affordable housing units off the map.

That marked the rise of poverty and homelessness in Vancouver—and, UGM's

significant increase in Outreach services. With more and more people pushed into states of crisis, we opened our doors and went out inviting men, women, and families into our place of refuge and hope.

Because of the outpouring of love from kind-hearted people like you, UGM has been able to continue growing to meet the ever-increasing needs.

Now, we offer Outreach in communities like the Downtown Eastside, Surrey, New Westminster, Mission, and across the Fraser Valley.



1987

THE CLOSURE OF RIVERVIEW HOSPITAL

When mental health facility Riverview Hospital announced its closure, UGM knew countless people would end up displaced, and struggling with mental health and addiction in the Downtown Eastside.

The community's needs were changing—and UGM felt it was our duty to help fill the gaps. Anticipating that future guests would need proper mental health support, we set out to professionalize our Alcohol & Drug Recovery programs.

UGM started working with the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) to shape our programming, and brought registered mental health and addictions counsellors onto our team to complement our ongoing spiritual counselling.

Since then, we've committed to staying aligned with the CMHA's best, proven practices. Today, that means each man and woman who come to UGM through the worsening opioid overdose crisis doesn't just experience life-giving compassion; they have the best chance of finally breaking free from addiction.



Photo: City of Coquitlam Archives



A community member receives a warm take-out meal from a caring Outreach Worker

2020

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, the message from B.C.'s leadership was clear: stay home, stay safe. But for those struggling with poverty, homelessness, or addiction, the measures meant to safeguard only deepened their crises.

The restrictions brought crippling economic and mental health hardships into communities already struggling with the unaffordable cost of living, and increasingly fatal opioid overdose crisis. And the scaling down of community services pushed all kinds of men, women, and families into states of emergency—and toward poverty.

But because you supported UGM this year, we had the resources to immediately step in and fill the gaps.

Through the pandemic, you've helped serve meals in take-out containers, provided more family food hampers, and kept our Emergency Shelter, Case Management, and Alcohol & Drug Recovery programs going—so people still have access to life-saving care and connection.

2020

UNEARTHING RACIAL INJUSTICE

It's always been UGM's heart to love and serve all people without discrimination. But the overwhelming pain that Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) are experiencing due to systemic racism has called us to step back, and evaluate how we can actively do better.

As a result of traumatic racial injustices like colonization and the residential school system, Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in B.C.'s economic disparities, homelessness counts, and overdose deaths. Thankfully, your love is helping bring healing at UGM—one life at a time—and our next step in this is giving our BIPOC community a platform to share their voices.

But change also has to start from within. Internally, UGM's Senior Leadership Team is intentionally reflecting on staff feedback. A newly-formed Anti-Racism Committee is providing education and anti-racist policy recommendations. And the University of Alberta's Indigenous Canada course is now a core training for all UGM staff.

These are just a few first steps of many in transforming UGM from an organization that does not condone racism, into one that is anti-racist. We are committing to this for as long as our organization stands—with a hope to make our communities feel more like God's Kingdom every day, where the diversity and individuality of every person is truly heard, honoured, and loved.



Ayikipisim comes from Frog Lake First Nation, Northern Alberta. She is a thriving First Nations Cree Artist, Sixties Scoop Survivor, and UGM Housing resident



Mike's life was transformed 11 years ago through the Mobile Mission and Alcohol & Drug Recovery. Today, he's thriving and an invaluable UGM volunteer

Over the years, your kind-hearted support has met guests in times of social and economic hardships—and, in the face of personal crisis.

Thank you for making that possible through 2020. You stepped in and completely transformed lives, like Matt and Courtney's.

Together, we can continue walking alongside men, women, and families as they courageously persevere out of poverty, homelessness, and addiction, and journey toward renewal.

ONE LIFE AT A TIME

Matt self-medicated through an addiction for years, but didn't realize how lifeless he'd become until he found himself face-to-face with homelessness. Needing a place to sleep, Matt came to UGM's Emergency Shelter. That's when someone asked if he'd ever tried Alcohol & Drug Recovery.

When Matt was 25, he was in college and had a bright future ahead. But life took a sharp turn when he was walking one day and got hit by a car. *"I was pretty mangled—head injury, fractured skull, brain aneurysm, and soft tissue damage. I lost everything,"* he remembers. To cope with the pain and trauma, Matt started self-medicating with alcohol and drugs. ICBC entered the picture a year later, and he finally started getting help from doctors and therapists. *"But by then, I already didn't know how to stop using substances."*

Over the next seven years, Matt spiralled into addiction, and completely lost his zeal for life and sense of dignity. *"I didn't care. I didn't have feelings. I didn't love. I was so numb inside, I didn't feel loved,"* he says quietly. It was also difficult for Matt to see the

severity of his addiction to alcohol and drugs. *"It was irrational how much I was using; I didn't think of the consequences. But now, I know that impulsiveness was part of my head injury."*

Eventually, Matt found himself homeless. *"It was just three days, but being homeless is very discomforting,"* he shares. *"I felt like I'd come to the end of myself."* But thankfully, an Outreach Volunteer referred Matt to UGM's Emergency Shelter. And that led to an interaction with an Alcohol & Drug Recovery alumnus which changed his life. *"He sat down with me and asked, 'Have you ever tried recovery?' It took me three days to realize, 'Yeah, I need help. I can't stop.'"*

UGM's Alcohol & Drug Recovery program gave Matt the space and resources to heal. Here, he discovered healthy coping mechanisms, and transformed his perspective on life. *"Anything UGM had to offer: classes, hiking with Expeditions, First Aid courses, schooling—I jumped on board,"* he explains. *"The classes taught me life skills. Hiking showed me something outside of myself—God's creation. And the community taught me how to live and love again."*

After coming to UGM, Matt sadly lost his twin brother and mother. He stayed strong and achieved over two years of sobriety, but eventually relapsed twice. *“At first, I thought, ‘Why is this happening to me?’”* he shares. Thankfully, Matt returned to his UGM family, and hasn’t stopped persevering since. *“Now, I know the bigger picture. God put me here so I could handle the tribulations of life. I feel like I’ve grown leaps and bounds, and I’m finally feeling peace.”*

Today, Matt is celebrating three years of consecutive sobriety, and his new Chemical Addictions Worker Diploma. He is journeying toward becoming a Trauma and Addictions Counsellor, and is also putting his heart to help in action at UGM. As a beloved member of our Maintenance Team, Matt is crucial in keeping our buildings sanitized and safe for guests through the pandemic. *“Many people we serve feel like the world is against them—but UGM is not. And that’s the thing: we’re a hand of hope. It’s saving lives—and that’s why I’m still here,”* he says, smiling. *“It saved mine.”*





After losing two children to the foster care system, Courtney felt hopeless and fell deeper into addiction. But when she discovered she was pregnant again, she found herself at a crossroads: risk losing another child, or work toward transformation. That's when Courtney stepped into UGM's Sanctuary.

Courtney was born into a family plagued by addiction. After losing her dad at a young age, she was put into the foster care system. *"I lived in abusive homes, started drinking and smoking at age 14, and was out on my own by 15,"* she shares. Later having a son and becoming the mother she wanted to be was difficult, due to Courtney's struggle with addiction, and abusive long-term boyfriend. *"When I tried leaving with my son, he called the cops and said, 'You're never gonna see your kid again.' And eventually, that's what happened."*

A few years later, Courtney gave birth to a daughter, who was immediately taken away at the hospital. *"I tried getting a continuing custody order for both my kids, and the ministry told me to go to treatment—so I did,"* she explains. After finishing recovery, Courtney

waited and waited, but never heard back. *“After some time, I relapsed. Then, I was misled into signing an open adoption and lost them. I never gave up on trying to get them back, but it was so comforting to pick up a drink or go to crack, and to not feel anything.”*

Courtney’s addiction intensified over the next decade as she coped with her heartache—until three years ago, when Courtney found out she was pregnant again. Faced with the reality of her addiction and conflicting desire to be present in this child’s life, she started recovery once again. But this time, she was referred to UGM’s Sanctuary, where care is provided for mothers and babies. *“My sister had led me to Christ—so I knew God had a plan.”*

While at UGM, Courtney relapsed and made the difficult decision of temporarily placing her newborn daughter into foster care. *“That’s when I got on my knees and asked God to help,”* she remembers. Within two months, Courtney was back on track at The Sanctuary, and had her daughter. *“She, and Jesus, kept me on the right path. God lit up the way back to The Sanctuary. God is in a lot of places, but he’s definitely here, working miracles.”*

Though Courtney’s journey hasn’t been without its bumps, today, she is two years sober and life has never been better. Last September, she gave birth to another beautiful boy. And in May, she secured housing and started the Social Services Worker program at Vancouver Career College, supported by UGM’s Tuition Grant Scholarship. *“I went into the program just accepting I’d have a \$22,000 student loan, because I wanted to do something with my life, provide for my family, and help others struggling with addiction live in peace—so the scholarship was a relief.”*

Courtney is so grateful for how UGM continues walking alongside her in her journey. *“I believe UGM doesn’t give up on people,”* she says, confidently. *“Even though I’ve left The Sanctuary, they’re giving me supplies for my baby, and family food hampers during the COVID-19 pandemic.”* And through the Repair to Wear sewing program, Courtney continues building a loving, faith-based support system who she knows will be there for her, no matter what. *“The women are so open-hearted; being at UGM is like self-care for me. It’s my place of peace.”*

2019-2020 YEAR IN REVIEW

155

men stayed in Gateway, UGM's pre-recovery program

26,308

nights of safe shelter

7

women's lives transformed by completing recovery at Lydia Home

5,536

clothing items distributed

1,268

food hampers distributed—**60% more** than last year, because of COVID-19

928

new Mobile Mission connections made in Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley

2,153

hygiene kits distributed

287,155

hot, nutritious
meals served
—an average of
785 meals daily

378

activity kits provided
to families during
the pandemic

36

men's lives transformed
by completing Alcohol
& Drug Recovery

34

women successfully
transitioned from
The Sanctuary to their
next step, inc. **6**
with babies

37

people returned
to school to further
their education
through Career
Development

493

people found
housing, employment,
detox, recovery, shelter,
or health services
through referrals

40

kids and youth
enrolled in Eastsiders
Homework Club
and The SPACE

Throughout Union Gospel Mission's 80-year history, weathering storms through God's grace has always been part of our story. Against all odds, UGM has endured and grown through crises, and we have been here to help those who are struggling with poverty, homelessness, and addiction, no matter what. But even more inspiring is the incredible life change and perseverance we see in guests through these times—and we are filled with such gratitude, knowing it's only been possible because of the immense care and generosity of donors like you.

Through the darkness of 2020, your compassion shone light. By reaching out to UGM, you provided life-saving take-out meals, food hampers, safe shelter, and caring, socially-distanced Mobile Mission and home visits. Each connection gave someone hope, dignity, and a reminder they're not alone. You also fueled UGM's life-changing continuum of care, meaning so many people started addiction recovery, schooling, new jobs, and secured safe housing. They started their journey toward renewal.

But UGM's guests are not the only ones who have grown in resiliency. The ongoing pandemic and

unearting of systemic racism have forced us all to dig a little deeper to find hope, strength, and a renewed sense of togetherness. At UGM, these are sentiments we see felt by our community every day, as they work hard to overcome poverty, homelessness, and addiction. Perhaps enduring this challenging season also serves as a reminder of their incredible courage; we hope our guests' fortitude inspires you, just as your support inspires us.

Moving forward, so much still needs to be done to rebuild lives in our communities. However, UGM has so much hope—and a bright vision for tomorrow. For years, we've felt God calling us to step up once again, and extend our entire comprehensive range of programs to communities across Metro Vancouver and the Fraser Valley. The devastating impact of this year's crises show us this is necessary. And the way kind people like you have generously outpoured to continue transforming lives proves it is possible.

We are thrilled to share with you that this vision is already coming to life. This Fall, we're opening the doors to UGM's new Women & Families Centre in the Downtown Eastside. Here, struggling women,

mothers, and children will call UGM home until they completely re-establish themselves—from our expanded Women’s Recovery programs, to supportive housing, life skills, career development, onsite internship programs, and childcare, through an empowering Aftercare program.

Because of you and your heartfelt commitment to feeding hope and changing lives, UGM can continue being here to uplift men, women, and families, no matter what. We are incredibly grateful to God for blessing us with every person in the UGM family like you, who so lovingly gives their time, talents, and resources to make achieving our mission possible every day. With a humble heart, we sincerely thank you. Thank you for the past 80 years of transforming communities—we can’t wait to see what we’ll do next, together.

God Bless,



William B. Mollard
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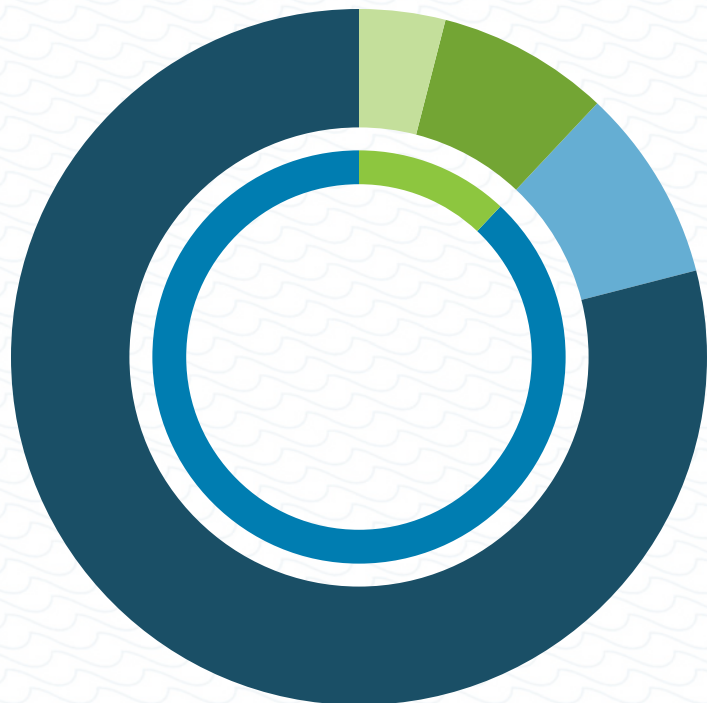
Almira Chow

Robert Pasman

Doug Powell

Trevor Wilson

2019-2020 FISCAL YEAR IN REVIEW



Donations & Other Revenues

\$29,541,032

- Donations 88%
\$25,855,522
- Annual Campaign 79%
- Legacy Campaign 9%
- Other Revenues 12%
\$3,685,510
- Social Housing 8%
- Store Sales, Investments & Others 4%

Expenses & Designated Funds

\$23,970,176



- Programs, Services & Social Housing 77%

\$18,492,730

- Outreach & Recovery 51%
- Housing 11%
- Education & Engagement 11%
- Other 4%

- Development 15%

\$3,614,461

- Administration 8%

\$1,862,985

UGM IS HERE NO MATTER WHAT



Union Gospel Mission acknowledges with humble gratitude that our sites are located on the traditional unceded lands of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh, Katzie, Kwantlen, Qayqayt and the Sto:lo First Nations



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