



**Emerging Into Light**

A symbol of recovery and resilience for people who care about mental illness and health



**June 2016 Annual Report**

**Our Vision**  
 "Mentally healthy people in a healthy society"

**Our Mission**

The Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), a nation-wide volunteer organization, promotes the mental health of all and supports the resilience and recovery of people experiencing mental illness. CMHA accomplishes this mission through advocacy, education, research and service.

Canadian Mental Health Association - Port Alberni Branch (CMHA-PA) is dedicated to providing programs and services that foster individual growth and promote mental wellness, leading to the development of strong families and a healthy community. We believe that the following principles are essential to mental health and a personally satisfying quality of life: *Support, Inclusion, Empowerment, Compassion, Responsibility, Respect and Social Justice.*

**Message from the President**

CMHA Port Alberni continues to thrive for residents of the Alberni Valley thanks to the dedicated efforts of the staff, members and supporters. I believe that awareness and acceptance of mental illness is at an all-time high. There is much room for improvement but for the moment let's celebrate how far we have come. This year the Ride-Don't-Hide event was the most successful ever. When seeking sponsorship, I found that most people saw the cause to be worthy and were quick to offer a donation. Furthermore, they were openly thankful for the part that the CMHA plays in the community. Many had stories to tell about how mental illness had affected them or their families. At a recent meeting with other CMHA representatives from around the Province, there was some discussion about where the CMHA fits into the spectrum of services that are available for mental illness. It was suggested that we provide the human touch, the interface between the health-care system and society. I'm okay with that.

Mark Zenko,  
 Board President

Executive Director

Dear CMHA Port Alberni Member

I would like to welcome everyone in attendance to the Canadian Mental Health Association – Port Alberni Branch 2016 Annual General Meeting. Once again CMHA-PA experienced a year filled with activity. Please see the program reports.

In the past year, everyone involved – staff, volunteers and clients – worked hard to maintain our programs and services

We are proud to offer the community these programs and services: Subsidized housing for 101 people at four locations offering different levels of support; an International Center Clubhouse Development. Clubhouse; Peer Support Program; Advocacy; Homeless Outreach; BC Housing Homeless Prevention Program; Food Matters Frozen Meals Program; Healthy Harvest Horticulture Program; and the Disability Parking Program.

I would like to announce that as of December 2016 I will be leaving CMHA after serving 17 years as Executive Director. These past years have been both challenging and rewarding. Those of you who know me know that I will be moving to Ontario to be closer to my family.

We continue to be involved with Ride Don't Hide event. The purpose of this event is to raise awareness of mental illness, reduce stigma, enjoy a healthy family activity and generate donations. Our corporate sponsor/partner is Shoppers Drug Mart. It is our goal to expand this fundraising activity to be better each year.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge our funders: Island Health, BC Housing, BC Gaming, The Vancouver Foundation, personal donors and local businesses that have supported us through the year. Also, I wish to thank everyone involved with CMHA Port Alberni: member, volunteers and staff. Your contribution is wholly appreciated and valued

respectfully submitted,  
 Bob Hargreaves, Executive Director, CMHA-PA



**OUTREACH PROGRAM**

Our Outreach Program works with clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness due primarily to mental health issues and/or crises. Under the new HPP (Homeless prevention program), Outreach works with Women fleeing violence, Young adults aging out of the juvenile system, people leaving corrections, people (primarily mental health clients) released from hospital.

Outreach continues to be very busy connecting clients to services, providing supports, helping secure housing and helping clients maintain housing through advocacy and rental supplements. Challenges over the past year and going into the future are:

- Housing costs have increased dramatically, causing further hardship for people living in poverty
- There is a low inventory of middle barrier housing which has caused a greater demand on our rental supplement programs
- Finding appropriate supports for clients to aid them in maintaining their housing has been a significant challenge. Due to the high volume of clients we work with it is very difficult for us to provide ongoing support
- We face substantial barriers and challenges when trying to connect clients to Income Assistance. While our original Fast Tracking Protocol still stands, the Ministry of Social Development and Social Innovation no longer seems to recognize it. This makes it very difficult to assist new clients in opening files, which increases homelessness

Outreach continues to build and maintain relationships with local and West Coast agencies. All in all, the last year has presented many new challenges but outreach continues to strive to provide the best possible services and advocacy for clients. As of June, 2016, Outreach has worked with over 1700 clients. Between April first 2015 and March 31 2016, Outreach has worked with 385 Individuals. This does not represent the number of client interactions, just the clients worked with.

Aboriginal	148
Other	231
Don't Know	6
Male	212
Female	173
Single	253
Couple	25
Family	107

Homeless Prevention Program (HOP)	293
Homeless Outreach Program (HPP)	92
Clients with stated mental Health Issues	140

**Healthy Harvest**

Healthy Harvest provides a meaningful and inclusive environment for people living with disabilities to engage in valuable work. The farm aims to help clientele gain a transferable skill set, build community, and learn the full cycle surrounding growing vegetables. Spending time in nature, digging in the soil, and nurturing plants, contribute to personal wellness. The hard work of participants has broader implications for the community at large by contributing to local food security as well as providing community members with a source of non-certified organic vegetables.

The past year has seen significant improvements to the farm site, an increased community profile, and a strengthening of partnership with community organizations such as the Hupacasath First Nation, Huu-ay-aht First Nation, INEO Training and Employment, and Alberni District Secondary School. There has also been a renewed effort to seek out applicable grant applications to ensure diverse funding streams. To date, this year the farm has received a \$450 seed donation from West Coast Seeds, a \$4600 grant and additional \$1400 donation for irrigation expansion and upgrades. There are more grant applications in the works, including a joint application with INEO which would capture federal funding to run a youth training program, a joint application with the Hupacasath to cover fencing for the site, as well as a couple other applications which would cover participant's wages.

With regards to the current farm site expansion, which more than doubles our growing capacity, we are hoping to increase the scope of training for our participants and get mechanisms in place to extend the growing season. This will increase production and maximize our potential revenues utilizing a comprehensive marketing strategy twinned with fundraising by CMHA Port Alberni. Healthy Harvest Farm generates revenue by selling produce via a seasonal self-serve farm gate stand, restaurant sales, online ordering and a small CSA (community supported agriculture) box program. Healthy Harvest welcomes more support from the Frozen Foods Program and Clubhouse lunch program. Last fiscal year Healthy Harvest generated combined revenue of sales and fundraising totalling \$18,744.32 and has slightly higher projections for this upcoming year with the following year being much higher.

Above and beyond our committed paid staff, Healthy Harvest Farm has several community volunteers who contribute their time to the farm, high school students, and people seeking work experience to help with securing jobs. The numbers of people utilizing the farm in various components over the past year has included 10 Clubhouse members, 8 INEO clients coming for work experience, over 30 community volunteers, and 2 separate classes from the high school. Having a broad cross section of the local community contribute and learn alongside our clients is an integral way to decrease the stigma around mental illness as well as allowing for less isolation for the participants coming out.

Through our expansion of the current farm site, Healthy Harvest will be able to provide more opportunities to those who have a mental illness. Through learning to grow, nurture and harvest organically grown vegetables, clients can begin the journey to take a more proactive approach to their own self-care. They feel valued, productive, and see the direct results of their contribution. In this supportive environment clients build confidence in their own capabilities and learn how to interact respectfully and as part of a team.

**Clubhouse**

This past year has been one of change and transitions. We have seen a complete staff turnover, and have welcomed Mike Markin as the new 31.5 hour a week, Clubhouse Generalist. We are in the process of hiring another full time staff for the 40 hour per week position. We have seen 36 new members who bring with them new perspectives, enthusiasm and creativity.

Our members in general, continue to be challenged by poverty, inadequate or non-existent housing, multiple health issues, along with living with mental health issues. The need for community building, empowerment, confidence building, and non judgemental support is greater than ever. Our regular members continue to take pride and ownership of Clubhouse and I have seen a marked increase in participation, especially since we have had staff changes.

**Employment Unit:** We have 13 regular Transitional Employment positions and five casual/relief members who cover in the event of illness. The wages have been

Month	Total # of Member Visits	Average Daily Attendance	Total # of Lunches Served	Average # of Lunches Served	Total # of Outreach calls/mail	# of New Members	# of Active Members for the Month	*Active Members over 3 months	% Rate of Participation
Apr-15	508	25.4	384	19.2	28	1	73	94	78%
May-15	520	26	397	19.85	14	1	72	95	76%
Jun-15	625	28.41	481	21.86	47	5	77	103	75%
Jul-15	552	25.09	390	17.73	57	4	72	97	74%
Aug-15	492	24.6	402	20.1	39	2	64	95	67%
Sep-15	498	23.7	443	21.09	29	1	60	85	71%
Oct-15	558	26.57	491	25.8	11	2	63	72	88%
Nov-15	458	22.9	413	20.65	14	0	63	66	96%
Dec-15	484	23.05	532	23.1	10	2	65	67	97%
Jan-16	407	20.35	416	20.8	14	2	56	73	77%
Feb-16	448	22.4	419	20.95	22	2	62	72	86%
Mar-16	472	22.45	450	22.5	22	7	68	70	97%
Average	453	24.2	435	21.1	26	2	66	82	82%

negotiated at contract to close to industry standard, paying union wages, or \$15 per hour plus 4% in lieu of benefits. On top of the TE positions, we have the farm workers who are given an honorarium in lieu of a wage. Our Peer Support workers also receive honorariums for their work. The Catalyst and CMHA farm positions are gearing up for the season, which brings new excitement and enthusiasm to the entire unit. The Clubhouse staff have been active in reaching out to the community to create new Transitional Employment positions. The businesses in our community are supportive of the Clubhouse in principle, but have so far been hampered by union issues, finances, logistics and their own overstaffing.

We continue to support thirteen members who have independent employment. Support ranges from emotional support, employer liaison/education, debriefing, skill

development, resumes, cover letters, role-playing communication skills, crisis management, referrals and mediation. Interventions and support are always aimed at assisting members to maintain the jobs they have, to transition to a better position within the company, or elsewhere.

**Education Unit:** We have been hampered by the NIC's funding predicaments which have cut out completely, any adapted courses or opportunities that they previously were able to offer. We have utilized our staff and members' skills and experience by offering Yoga classes (17 members participating), computer skills tutorials (8 members participating), job search tutorials (7 members), car maintenance/repair tutorials (2 members), and taxes tutorials (14 members). Our practicum student put on a well attended and informative workshop on preparing a will. We have another 5 members who are being supported as they continue to reach their education goals in higher education at NIC, ABE, or on line courses etc.

**Kitchen Unit:** We put on a fabulous Christmas dinner and Easter dinner. Our special days are enthusiastically attended by over 40 members who look forward to those celebrations all year long. All the work that goes into those days couldn't be possible without the participation of some very skilled, hard working members. Our regular lunch program is the lifeblood of the Clubhouse. We have an average daily lunch crowd of 25 members. With rising food costs, many members count on the nutritious meals that are provided, along with the acceptance, purpose, and belonging that comes with membership.

**Clerical Unit:** is in the process of beginning a newsletter again. The members decided that the "Voice" newsletter will be published within the next month. I admire the talent and skill of our members who write so eloquently and have some amazing insights to share. We have a dedicated group who are hard at work preparing, and everyone looks forward to the inaugural edition.

**Tag Day:** netted \$1200, with everyone having a good time, and representing CMHA in a very friendly and professional manner.

**Practicum Students:** We had four practicum students over the year that contributed to Clubhouse in a meaningful way and had some valuable learning opportunities. Three were human service students and one was studying for her Psychiatric Nursing degree. Personally, I have had a full year as the CMHA Manager and the time has flown by. I have taken on some HR duties, along with some union liaison, admin, supervisory and general operations assistance to the Executive Director. I have thoroughly enjoyed the diversity of the job and remain fully committed to the betterment of the organization. Maintaining the strategic direction, vision and mission of CMHA remains a priority for me, and I look forward to another year of growth and positive change.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katrina Kiefer – Manager, CMHA Clubhouse

**Advocacy**

The Advocacy Program continues to be a busy program operating two days a week. Wednesday morning is a "drop-in" format which is sometimes chaotic due to large numbers of clients, but it is a valuable service for clients with no phone and no ability to keep set appointments. Wednesday afternoons and Fridays are considered to be open for appointments only but often there are numerous individuals waiting for advocacy service.

The most frequent problem type is issues with the Ministry of Social Development. The second most frequent is Tenant/Landlord issues. Canada Pension Disability and Appeals are another area of service. Legal Information workshops held included Tenant Rights and Responsibilities, Welfare Rights and Human Rights.

**Highlights of Program Stats for April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015:**

Ministry of Social Development Issues:	145
Residential Tenancy:	61
Income Tax Returns:	156

This program is funded by the Gaming affiliation grant and donations.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Patty Edwards, CMHA-PA Advocate

## Peer Support

Peer Support continues to be well attended. We have three workers who receive honorariums and provide much needed referrals, compassionate understanding, and a safe environment. Our Senior Peer Support Worker, Bev Nielsen returned from an absence, and along with Al Milligan and Gary Hipwell, the work of Peer Support carries on. They are the welcoming faces representing CMHA for people who drop in to the building, as well as outreach, and public relations in our community. Our Senior Workers will be actively involved in the training of new workers which will begin this summer. We will provide training in the areas of confidentiality, boundaries, active listening skills, suicide assessment, communication, grief and loss, assertiveness and knowledge of community resources. This training session is expected to take approximately 5 weeks and will be held at Clubhouse. Keep an eye out for our revamped Peer Support brochure with a few new pictures of our smiling Peer Support Workers and updated information, in an easy to read format. Thank you to clubhouse members in the Clerical Unit who worked hard on that project.

Respectfully submitted,  
Katrina Kiefer – Manager, CMHA Clubhouse

## Administration

The Administrative Assistant has continued working diligently to support the Executive Director and CMHA-PA in various administrative duties and projects. The *maladjusted* play was presented in the New Year and lately we have been busy with the Ride Don't Hide bicycle event on June 26, 2016.

The sale of Disability Parking Permits to community members has been steady, with sales and donations totalling \$3,051 in the last fiscal year. This has brought even more people into the building and it has been a pleasure to serve them. The Administrative Assistant has been able to inform many of these people about the services that CMHA-PA offers.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Diane McAnulty, Administrative Assistant

## Outreach

In 2015-16 CMHA Port Alberni Outreach team continued to work with agencies in Port Alberni and the West Coast to deliver services to clients who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Outreach documented work with 320 clients. Due the high number of client interactions, this only represents the documentation that BC Housing requests and does not represent the actual number of clients served or the number of interactions with individual clients.

Services provided include:

- Meeting with homeless at a street level, securing income;
- Securing housing, Mediation and prevention;
- Landlord tenant advocacy;
- Agency advocacy;
- Administer rental subsidies;
- Generally providing services that will house a client or prevent homelessness.

Since November 1/14 the outreach program has expanded to include the new, "Homeless Prevention Program". This new BC Housing Program was created to assist specific clients at risk of homelessness. To qualify for HPP Rent Supplements a client must be either: First Nations, women fleeing abuse, people coming out of incarceration, youth timing out of juvenile system, or people coming out of hospitalization.

This program allows us to provide a higher level of support for a longer period of time to a vulnerable demographic. We have worked with 44 HPP clients since Nov 2014.

Housing has remained relatively stable during the past fiscal year; however we lost 14 decent, affordable units to a structure fire. In addition, hydro increases are making it extremely difficult for people to afford basic shelter. It is not unusual for us to see hydro bills in excess of \$1000.

In 2014/2015, Outreach has taken on 135 new clients, secured housing for 178 clients, and delivered close to 600 rent supplements.

In November 2014, Michael Kleyn joined the Outreach team as a half time member. He is doing valuable work with low barrier clients.

This program is funded by BC Housing.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Mark Cairney, Laurie Allen & Michael Kleyn, Outreach Workers

## Housing

### Roger Street Apartments

It has been another busy year for CMHA – PA Branch's Transitional Supported Housing. During the fiscal year we remained at full 42 unit occupancy, except during one month when we had a one unit vacancy. Vacancy turnover rate has dropped considerably during this past year. It is now no longer uncommon for a month or two to go by with zero move outs. We believe, in large part, that this is due to people finding it more challenging to locate safe and secure housing at an affordable rate here in the community.

The building is staffed by two full time Tenant Support Workers and eight casuals make up the other shifts. Due to a change in staffing, Advocacy Services are not being offered in the building at the present time. We hope that in the future, Advocacy will return to the site. Our tenants are feeling the gap in service as they tend to have physical and transportation issues that make it difficult to attain services elsewhere. Currently there are 15 female and 27 male tenants. 34 tenants are on provincial Persons with Disabilities benefits, 5 tenants are on regular Income Assistance benefits, and 3 tenants are on OAP/ CPP Disability benefits.

Although part of the job of Tenant Support Workers is to perform some maintenance functions, we have 2 Clubhouse members who have Supported Employment positions, 1 Clubhouse member in a Transitional Employment position and 1 former RSA tenant with a permanent casual position who all perform the bulk of maintenance and grounds care duties for the building. Each worker works approximately 5.5 hours per week. Our Canteen program provides a much needed service of offering food and necessities at cost. We shop in bulk and pass on those savings to tenants who buy in smaller quantities. The service is well used by most of the tenants and definitely assists those who find transportation difficult.

The Food Matters Program has picked up in popularity as it provides nutritious, good quantity size meals at a significant cost savings. Currently there are 12 RSA tenants signed up for the program with another 1-2 people signing up later this month. Our 2016 garden is underway and it is totally tenant driven this year. There are about 6-7 tenants who are actively involved.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mark Vandervelde  
RSA Program Coordinator



### King George Apartments

Our working relationship with the King George Apartments officially started on July 1, 2012. The building has 42 well maintained one and two bedroom units and presently we have the ability to offer 20 subsidized units. As well, all of the other units are rented at below fair market value.

In our second year we were able to offer the housing successfully and establish a good working relationship with the building's owner and his staff.

In our third year, we have been able to continue our relationship with the building's owner and maintain a good working relationship with the building's caretakers.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Hargreaves, Executive Director

### Port House

Port House was occupied 1208 out of the year's total 1462 bed-nights, making the occupancy for the year 82%. There were 181 out of a total of 732 crisis bed-nights occupied, meaning the crisis beds were occupied 24% of the time. Of the 732 transition bed-nights there was an occupancy rate of 1027 bed-nights (meaning one or both crisis beds were used as transition) for a total of 140% transition occupancy. At this time Port House is fully occupied.

Port House remains in compliance after all annual inspections, such as BC Housing, Fire Safety. CMHA –PA Port House continues to work in concert with Port Alberni Association for Community Living, and West Coast General Hospital.

Submitted by  
Lori Gassner  
Residence Co-ordinator  
CMHA Port House

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### Kendall Avenue Apartments

There are 15 units at Kendall Ave Supportive Housing. Presently all tenant units are occupied.

Kendall provides supportive and independent living for people with serious and persistent mental illnesses. Each tenant that resides at Kendall Ave is assigned a case manager with Island Health, as well as an Island Health support team member. CMHA staff provides tenant support such as: life skills, conflict resolution, advocacy, active listening and emotional support. Kendall Ave continues to provide a breakfast program for a nominal fee to the tenants. There are five individuals who participate on a regular basis as well as several other tenants who attend on a sporadic basis. Sales in the canteen program continue to flourish and with the proceeds, we are able to host barbeques and special events such as Christmas dinner.

This last Christmas was the first without our long term staff, Betty Ivaniski who passed away on November 4, 2015. Betty always took extra care and attention over the holidays to make them special for the tenants, and she has been missed by all. One of our tenants will be graduating from North Island College, and will receive a diploma in Human Service Worker. In addition, we have a tenant who is presently employed with the Salvation Army.

### Food Matters Frozen Meal Program

Our Food Matters Program has been operating for the past five years, by providing kitchen training to our clients. Our trainees cook three nights a week for approximately 30 to 40 customers a night. Each healthy dinner is sold for \$2.50 or \$32.50 per month for three meals a week. Some of the kitchen training includes hands on skills such as food prep, temperature control, inventory, menu planning, reading and following recipes, and following food safe practices. The Foods Program has 6 trainees a year and each person has a six month contract. Upon completion of this program, they graduate with a certificate of completion and a reference letter. There is a connection with INEO to further job search and to complete resumes. INEO provides supports needed for employment such as work shoes and Foodsafe exams. We have had 4 of our graduates successfully find employment in our community. The program funding comes from Vancouver Island Health Authority and meal revenues.

Respectfully submitted,  
Stacy Whonnock, Facilitator/Instructor  
Food Matters Program

