



At Phoenix, we acknowledge that we have the privilege of living and working in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq People. We would like to take this opportunity to confirm our desire and intention to respectfully walk in friendship.

Since 1987, Phoenix has been dedicated to supporting youth and contributing to a vibrant community. Phoenix's 11 locations in Halifax/K'jipuktuk, NS, provide a continuum of care for youth ages 11–24 and their families. We offer important services and programs including shelter, food, housing support, health care, parenting support, recreation, education and employment services, and clinical therapy. Our team of caring professionals recognizes that each person who comes to us has individual needs as well as strengths. People are the leaders in their own lives; Phoenix is a leader in supporting them.

Services

- Advocacy
- Youth outreach
- Community engagement
- Youth and family therapy
- Arts, recreation, and leadership
- Health services
- Parent support
- Money management
- Crisis support
- Education support
- Employment counselling and support

Programs

- Phoenix Supportive Housing Program
- Phoenix Centre for Youth
- Phoenix Youth Shelter
- Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre
- LE@P (Learn & Explore at Phoenix)
- Phoenix Youth and Family Therapy
- Phoenix Youth and Community Centre
- Phoenix Youth Outreach Program

Social Media

-  PhoenixYouthPrograms
-  @PhoenixHFX
-  Phoenix Youth Programs
-  @PhoenixHfx
-  PhoenixYouthPrograms

phoenixyouth.ca

Keeping Connected
with Our Community



It is difficult to believe that more than a year has passed since the pandemic first touched Nova Scotian communities and the lives we knew changed in an instant.

Reflecting upon the year that was, I am filled with emotion.

The struggles, the loss, the uncertainty, and the isolation and fear we felt as COVID-19 gripped our landscape is all too real. At Phoenix, the pandemic deepened existing inequities and created new barriers for youth and families who were already experiencing marginalization.

Further, we witnessed race-based violence in our communities and across the globe. Though it is devastating to watch the impact of hate and ignorance, these moments became the long-overdue catalyst for advocacy, calling all people to speak up and protest in the fight against injustice and oppressive systems. Building equity and stability requires that we take meaningful action to make it a reality. It is hard and can evoke strong emotions, but Phoenix is dedicated to this journey, and we reaffirm our commitment to this work with humility.

This year has had its moments of beauty and compassion as well.

Our staff are amazing. They tenaciously found meaningful ways to continue essential services and programs, adapted to meet the needs of those we serve, and supported youth as they sheltered in place in our residential spaces, all while focusing on health and safety.

Our community is gracious, generous, and kind. The collective commitment of our donors, volunteers, and government partners ensured that Phoenix remained here for those who need us most. Your belief in the importance of our work provided the hope and strength for staff to carry on, in spite of such adversity. This, indeed, is the true essence of the Phoenix spirit.

This rollercoaster year showed us what we are capable of together. In these incredible acts of service and love of humanity we find a sense of balance for a world that has been turned on its ear.

With the power of your compassion and care for Phoenix youth and their families, we maintain our commitment to our mandate as we continually address the inequities of poverty, marginalization, and homelessness, and to advance the tenets of social justice broadly and deeply for positive change.

I offer a heartfelt thank you for being with us on the journey.

Timothy Crooks
Executive Director





Toby always knew that a career in architecture was in his future. Prior to arriving in Canada, he spent a year with a shadowing program under the tutelage of an architect in his home country of Nigeria.

After settling in Halifax, he began studying at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) in the Drafting-Architectural program and became connected with Phoenix Youth and Community Centre (PYCC) when he reached a difficult time in his life.

"I came in with a situation in which I had next to nothing. I came in 2017, and my mom passed away in 2018. As an immigrant, I didn't have family here or the financial backing when I needed to finish school," Toby shares. "Phoenix was able to help me figure out and navigate those waters when it was absolutely needed."

At PYCC, Toby was able to receive directed support that would allow him to continue in his studies and find a way to bridge his education to his career goals. Patricia, Team Lead at PYCC, says, "It's all about youth's interests. When Toby came in, he knew what he wanted. He came to Phoenix with a vision and just needed support and guidance along the way."

He applied for the Partners in Education (PIE) program, a Phoenix scholarship that supports youth financially to attend NSCC, which facilitated his completion of the program. After graduating, he was hired at PYCC as a summer student, where he tutored other youth in math, and engaged in a creative project in Mulgrave Park, producing a video that highlighted the rich cultural makeup of the community. Soon after, Toby became eligible for a new Phoenix employment program which propelled his future career aspirations to new heights.

Drafting Plans for a Fulfilling Future



Generously funded by Scotiabank, this employment program creates opportunities for youth to take part in a 16-week placement. Toby's interests and ambition led him to the award-winning modern architectural studio, Omar Gandhi Architect (OG).

"This is a dream come true for Toby," says Patricia, "because OG Architect is the main business that he talked about throughout his educational journey. If he could work for anyone in the world, OG is who he identified as his top choice."

She continues, "We get youth to do their own independent research on where they would want to work and explore the whole labour market first. This is where he was headed, it was a vision for him. He's doing amazingly well. They have given great reviews and are excited to have him as part of the team."

Toby is thrilled to get hands-on experience. Knowing that he would be working on active construction sites during times when COVID restrictions were lifted, Toby reached out for personal protective equipment and steel-toe boots to be compliant with the safety requirements of his position. An essential component of the program is ensuring potential barriers to employment are addressed, and includes funding for any clothing, training, or gear that may be needed for placements.

"The experience with OG has been amazing. I absolutely love it! It's different being in the field and being with people who have been there longer. So, it's been a journey and an education. Just being in the presence of so much experience does rub off on you. It feels like I'm on the right path," says Toby.

While architecture is a huge part of his life, he is also determined to find a way to support others when they find themselves at a crossroad.

Before Toby's mother passed away, she was involved with a non-profit that supports newcomers in their applications and settlement in Halifax. Today, her compassionate and philanthropic spirit is very much a part of him.

"It's difficult to explain if you have not experienced these challenges. Getting a hand when you needed it at your most crucial point – I was helped with getting this employment opportunity, and it has been more, a lot more, than I expected," he says. "My relationship with Phoenix, I don't really know how to pay back. When I get to where I need to be, I want to somehow give back to Phoenix. I believe in the work they do because it put me in the place that I am right now."

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Phoenix Youth Shelter in Place: Safe and Supported in Common Spaces



Throughout COVID-19, Phoenix staff have found unique ways to support the physical and mental health of youths who share common space in our residences.

For Phoenix youth, the shelter-in-place orders amplified the many intersecting challenges they experience every day. Tori, Key Worker at Phoenix House, says, "The pandemic's been hard for the youth; it threw a wrench in their plans. A lot of what we do is based on helping people take steps to living independently. So many of them were making progress and feeling like they were getting into a groove and gaining confidence. But then a lot of them lost their jobs, had disruptions to their schooling or lost their routines, and it's been really tough on their mental health."



A significant challenge for youth living in Phoenix residential spaces has been the need to isolate after a potential exposure. Fortunately, each youth has their own, private bedroom, and staff helped ensure they could stay connected to work, school, their community, and Phoenix supports. "We've been blessed with laptops that have helped when [the youth] need to be isolated," says Melissa, Intensive Case Manager at Phoenix Shelter. "We also got funding for technology and some youths were able to get phones, which has really helped."



Connection is one thing, but in Phoenix residential spaces, youth living together share common spaces, adding another layer of complexity as health and safety remains a top priority.

She continues, "When a youth who is isolating has to use the bathroom or go outside for fresh air, we have to clear the floor, sanitize

the space, and then have the youth go back to their room and sanitize again. There is a lot to consider, but we do what we have to do, and it's working."

Phoenix staff recognize the emotions and mental health of everyone, youth and staff alike, can take a toll, particularly during lockdowns. Melissa says, "I think a lot of our staff struggles have been around trying to keep the youth engaged and active while remaining inside or in the backyard. They play a lot of basketball which is great; and we have lots of art supplies." She continues, "The team has been so great at showing up and being here for the youth. The

kids are good and are feeling supported."

Dividing time between cleaning, youth support, and mental health and crisis management leaves little time for extras, but the staff continue to find ways to make even the little moments count. Melissa continues, "We spend a lot more time preparing the food so it's delicious, and hanging out with the youth and doing programming. We're trying to entertain them in way that they're engaged and safe."

Though COVID-19 has been difficult for so many, it has also propelled Phoenix staff to learn new ways to support youth and adapt to the ever-evolving tide of this pandemic. As essential service providers, Phoenix remained resolute in our commitment to continue meaningful support to the youth we have the privilege of serving. The health and well-being of youth, their families, the community we serve, and our staff are of utmost importance.

Parenting Support Keeps the Focus on Family



Phoenix's Parent Support program through the Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY) helps youth with children identify goals and gain access to important resources such as daycare, safe housing, and education and employment opportunities, while also supporting access to essential items, like diapers, wipes, baby clothes, food, and bus tickets for appointments. These supports alleviate some of the stress on young parents and allow them to focus on their families and plan for their future.

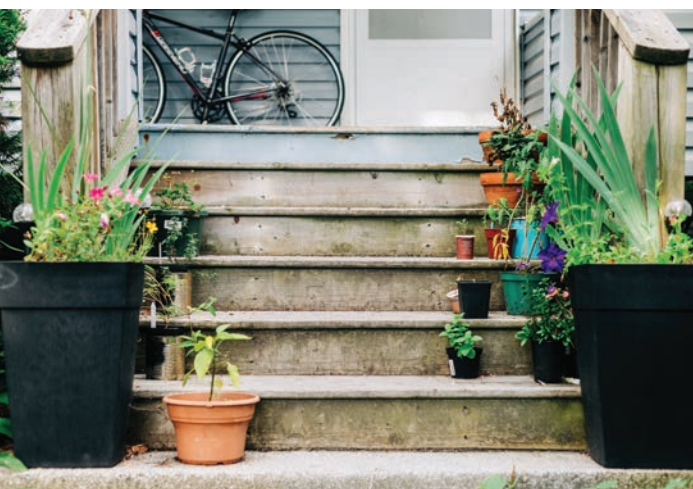
Leah, the Parent Support Case Manager, works with youth in a holistic way. She focuses on providing wrap-around supports, and if youth need to discuss the challenges and joys of parenting, they can reach out to her. Leah says, "Sometimes other pieces need to be worked on. For a youth to be successfully housed is probably the biggest barrier. If you can't have housing, how do you continue with education? How do you have stability with jobs? How do you have stability with children?"

During times of lockdown, home life can become particularly difficult. Leah says, "It is very challenging to be home with our children, to keep them entertained, to support them emotionally, to work, to facilitate online learning, to keep up with laundry, not to mention the financial pressures that many families are facing."

Youth were concerned that Phoenix would have to suspend essential programming like Parent Support, but staff have been able to maintain outreach support during the pandemic. Despite the many challenges that COVID-19 has brought to our communities, being able to modify and continue Phoenix services has made a positive impact on the youth we serve.

Leah says, "They know they can rely on us to be there and to do our best."

A Safe Place to Call Home



COVID-19 has posed all sorts of challenges for people around the world. The one that thing that universally tied everyone together was finding a place to stay safe and healthy.

Halifax was already dealing with low vacancy rates, and an increased cost of living. For youth experiencing homelessness or insecure housing, with limited resources or tenancy history, the pandemic posed an additional barrier to access safe and affordable housing, and put stress on the sheltering system at large.

To help remedy this, Phoenix engaged in supporting youth with shelter diversion where, together, we find safe, temporary accommodations and support them in place until longer and more stable options became available. Often this included delivering food baskets, ensuring they had appropriate technological supports, and supporting them in working through whatever challenges they were experiencing.

Rob Morris, Senior Director of Residential Programs, says, “We have seen extended stays in Phoenix residential programs because, for many youths, there is simply nowhere to move. COVID has created significant negative impacts. That being said, we never shut down, we stayed open, we provided supports, and dedicated significant energy in the past year toward keeping youth safe from COVID, including shelter diversion efforts.”

In addition to our three residential programs – Phoenix Youth Shelter, Phoenix House, and Phoenix Homes for Independence – essential housing support work also takes place in the community as we seek to find the best opportunities for youth and keep them safely housed. The Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY) is often the first program where youth connect with us. This central hub is where youth meet with staff to discuss their needs and begin navigating the options, programs, and services available to them.

To continue in our efforts to support youth in finding secure and affordable housing, Phoenix launched the Shared Accommodation Program.

“This program brings together youth looking for a roommate to share rent on an apartment, thus providing them with greater rental capacity in the market. We intentionally designed a roommate matching process that allows youth to select a potential roommate based on their respective needs,” says Rob. “At the end of the day, it is the youth’s choice as to who they want to roommate with. We’re there to guide them to think critically about who they are looking for in a potential roommate and continue to offer support through their tenancy together.”

Janel, Housing Support Worker at PCFY, has been coordinating the Shared Accommodation Program, and adds, “The hope with this program is that pooling the youth’s resources will make it easier to find housing. We offer roommate matching, so if a youth wants to live with a roommate but they don’t have anybody in mind, I can match them up with someone else in the program. They then have an opportunity to get know each other before they decide if they want to move forward. Once youth are housed, I can offer mediation, conflict-resolution, and interpersonal support.”



Another significant difficulty this pandemic has brought is being unable to provide the in-person support so many youths depend on. Janel shares, “A huge part of housing support was providing in-home supports. If youth were having issues with cleanliness or fixing something, we could show them hands-on how to do home repairs or help with basic life skills, which is something you lose when you do it over the phone or virtually.”

Despite these challenges, youth have been showing their strength and adaptability to the ever-evolving situation with COVID-19. For the most part, youth responded well to public health guidelines by wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and keeping their social bubbles within their residential spaces. Many youths living in Phoenix House or Phoenix Shelter also took advantage of COVID-19 vaccines when they were offered to the sheltering community.

However, the pandemic has had significant impact on the lives of so many youths. Issues of mental health and wellness and addictions can be difficult to manage and support when you need to be distant or isolate due to potential exposure risks. As we find ourselves in yet another year of the pandemic, the desire to

return to normal could not be more prevalent for youth and for Phoenix staff.

Rob says, “The thing that is missing is the ability to be together in a space. Our continuum of supports is always better served when we are present and engaged in person versus virtually. For our volunteers and community partners to be in the space and to see people again is critical. People are looking forward to seeing others in a real and meaningful way.”





Making the decision to embark on post-secondary education can be stressful even for the most astute student. But adding in challenges such as finances, housing, and, now, a global pandemic can make the application experience feel like a tailspin. However, for Phoenix, this became a record-setting year with 40 youth attending post-secondary programs at local colleges and universities.

Kathleen, Employment Engagement Specialist at Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre (PLEC), says, “I think there has been a big increase recently [in post-secondary enrolment] because our team has focused on supporting youth in finding reasons why they can go to college or university, instead of getting caught up in reasons why they can’t. We meet youth where they are and help remove barriers or perceived barriers that they might have. If there is a way to make it happen, and you have the will to do it, we are going to make it happen.”

Some of the perceived barriers youth may face are financial limitations and learning accommodations. “We don’t discount the fact that those are real challenges that come up for folks, but what we do is help people navigate post-secondary systems and recognize that things are changing. If you have struggled with a learning difference like dyslexia or ADHD, colleges and universities have accessibility departments that we can connect you to. We want to make spaces inclusive for folks and want to help people who do have various learning challenges to be successful.”

Record-setting year for post-secondary enrolments



Kathleen continues, “Post-secondary is expensive. Recognizing that a lot of students are worried about taking student loans, we reach out and assist in looking for scholarships and bursaries that connect them with post-secondary learning. We did a lot of research into what type of funding opportunities exist and we support youth with accessing those by helping with writing a letter of intent, filling out paperwork, or applying for loans and grants. If you want to go to school, we will support you in finding a way.”

Part of making the decision to enter a post-secondary program is knowing what sort of career opportunities are available that suit individual youth’s interests.

“This year we did a lot of career exploration, and sometimes that was just discussing different types of jobs that the youth may not have heard of. Youth may never have heard of a career like electrical engineering technician, but when they look into it may discover it is exactly the type of career they would be great at and would like to have.”

When the pandemic worsened and our communities went into the lockdown, the impact on youth and schooling was immediate. “It was hard to access the internet when you were going to the library or using the library in school when you don’t have Wi-Fi or even a computer at home,” says Kathleen.

The strong relationships the PLEC team have with community partners, such as Lake City Works and Public Good Society of Dartmouth, as well as donations from supporters, helped youth get connected with laptops and internet as youth transitioned to online learning.

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Though the stay-at-home order made in-person support temporarily impossible, the PLEC team continued to offer one-on-one support through virtual meetings and phone calls, ensuring that each youth’s individual needs were being heard and met. “We met in parks, on doorsteps, dropped off photocopies, picked up applications, anything we could do to be sure youth were getting the support they needed.”

“We’re taking a strengths-based approach and we know that there are so many factors that predict post-secondary attendance – income, education, success, and health are all really correlated. We want to make it a possibility for our youth to breakdown a lot of intergenerational barriers and get where they want to go because they can do it.”

Bringing Season's Greetings from a Distance



Every year, Phoenix youth and families look forward to celebrating the holidays together during the annual Youth Holiday Party. As with many events this past year, the Holiday Party would have to be cancelled to curb the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

"We started in late October to plan the youth party in a safe way. But we decided this year that it couldn't happen. A week after we made that decision is when the province went into the second lockdown, so we made the right call," says Katie, Coordinator of the Learn and Explore at Phoenix (LE@P) Program.

The Youth Holiday Party is seen as a time for coming together and celebrating as the greater Phoenix family, but the spread of COVID-19 made this impossible to continue in a way that would be safe for staff, youth, their families, and volunteers.



Instead, teams at the Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY) and in the residential programs found a way to continue the holiday traditions from a distance. Community members and corporate partners still found ways to gift items for the youth stockings and, with the continued support of a limited number of volunteers, we were able to assemble 250 of them – our most ever!

Katie says, "The volunteers got the stockings all done up. It was a huge shift for them as it's usually big groups socializing while they work, but this time they had much smaller groups and they had to be spread out as

they were putting the stockings together. Phoenix teams then banded together for a week and delivered the 250 stockings."

Among the items in the stockings were grocery cards. "This was especially significant for so many," says Katie. Grocery cards allow youth to buy their own holiday meals or buy items for their children's stockings. "In the middle of a pandemic, when food banks are struggling and a lot of other supports have been clawed back, a youth gets this gift card, and their first thought is, 'I can't wait to get my mom, my sister, my brother, my partner something nice.' It's so selfless," says Katie. "I think sometimes our youth get this terrible stigma of being selfish, but it's quite the opposite. Where so many of our youth have supported each other, as soon as they get the opportunity to pay someone back, share with others or show appreciation, that's their first instinct."

Maintaining strong connections with youth during the pandemic was paramount to ensuring that youths' needs around housing, food, health, and mental health were continually being met. By using virtual meetings, and eventually being able to open the PCFY spaces by appointment, we were able to nurture these relationships and ensure the health and wellness of the youth we serve.

Katie says, "Some youth hadn't seen staff in person in months and were happy to see them on their doorstep with a gift. The pandemic hasn't been easy on youth, especially when their community spaces are closing. For us to go to their spaces and check in on them, it was really nice, and I think it was really meaningful. I think it was another layer of relationship building with our youth and trust building. We recognize that this is really important, it's a tradition for us too, and we're committed to making it happen."

The Gift of Giving



Phoenix is a big believer in keeping heart-warming traditions alive. Though challenges may arise, holiday traditions and support do so much to keep youth and our communities connected and feeling uplifted.

Sperry Family

The Sperry family started the tradition of gathering donations for the holidays in memory of their son, and COVID-19 was the last thing that would stand in their way. The family was undeterred and went to great lengths to ensure that youth living in Phoenix residences would receive a gift. They literally stuffed a LifeFlight helicopter with donations! Through their generosity, the Sperrys were able to put together large holiday sacks filled with everything from essential items to individualized gifts for all the youth staying at the Phoenix Shelter, Phoenix House, and Phoenix Homes for Independence. Additionally, they donated toys for children and personal care items. To make the holidays feel extra cozy despite having to physically distance, the Sperry family also provided all the fixings for a hearty Christmas meal at the shelter.



Wendy Wagner

What began as a fun, small-scale project between Wendy and her daughters, turned into a frenzied knitting spree in support of Phoenix youth. The trio knitted colourful Santa hats to raise funds for Phoenix during the holidays. They began knitting these beautifully crafted hats during the summer months, knowing they would need to keep up with the demand once the holiday season arrived. And there certainly was demand! Their efforts were warmly received and enabled Wendy and her daughters to make a gift of more than \$2,000 to Phoenix.



Giacomantonio House

The Giacomantonio House on Halifax's Connaught Avenue is famous for its brilliant holiday light display, complete with Santa's sleigh and flying reindeer atop the roof. This year, the family thoughtfully placed a QR code on their lawn so visitors could easily scan and donate to Phoenix for the holidays.



Mappatura

Our friends at Mappatura brought the holidays home by preparing a decadent meal for take out on December 25th, so friends and families could enjoy a holiday meal safely in their bubble. And with the purchase of every meal, Mappatura donated \$5 to Phoenix.

Canadian Progress Club Halifax Citadel

Since Phoenix's inception, the Canadian Progress Club Halifax Citadel has been a strong supporter as volunteers, donors, and champions of the youth we serve. This holiday season was no different. They collected items from members, and, when public health restrictions limited gathering numbers, small groups of their dedicated volunteers took shifts to stuff stockings for youth. With the need for stockings greater this year, we ran out of items, but the Progress Club quickly rallied to make sure every stocking got filled.



Safely Bringing Our Community Together Through Our Signature Events



Every year, Phoenix hosts two signature events, Dreamscape and the Phoenix Holiday Luncheon, which typically bring together over 1,500 people to celebrate and raise critical funds for our programs and services. This year, with a global pandemic sweeping our province, we had to make the decision to suspend in-person events while still finding meaningful ways to engage with our community so our youth could continue to receive support when they need it most.

We'd like to give special thanks to our presenting sponsors Clearwater Seafoods and MICCO Companies for Virtual Dreamscape, and RBC Wealth Management Dominion Securities for the Luncheon To Go, and to our many event sponsors, donors, and champions. Your pivotal support and trust in our vision allowed us to find new ways to connect with our community.

Phoenix Holiday Luncheon To Go

The Phoenix Holiday Luncheon would typically bring 1,000 people together, but where the health of the community was paramount, we worked to find a safe way to still offer a delicious holiday meal.

Thus, was born the Phoenix Holiday Luncheon To Go, an event that provided a full turkey meal with all the trimmings in take-and-bake style so they could be enjoyed safely among bubbled friends, families, and colleagues. On the day of the event, the pick-up space was festively decorated, with a limited number of Phoenix staff and volunteers providing easy, contactless pick-up.



Wealth Management
Dominion Securities



MEDAVIE



Virtual Dreamscape

Dreamscape transitioned into a live-streamed event that offered supporters insight and stories on how Phoenix staff and youth were navigating those early days of the pandemic. Virtual Dreamscape also featured the musical stylings of Ben Caplan who entertained and delighted guests watching from the safety of their home. While we were unable to come together as a group, we were able to provide an engaging experience for our supporters.

Phoenix youth, Seth, shared part of his journey to our Virtual Dreamscape audience.



Excerpt from Seth's Speech from Virtual Dreamscape 2020

My name is Seth, I'm 23 years old and I've been involved with Phoenix for about a year.

I would like to start at the beginning, my beginning. There has always been a lot of darkness in my life. I was bullied all through school down to the day I graduated. I've had to deal with a lot of family deaths at a young age caused by mental health issues and regular health issues. At the age of four, I had a really bad injury to the head that caused me to have encephalitis, which is swelling of the brain, and that is the main contributor to all the mental health issues I suffer from today, along with family history.

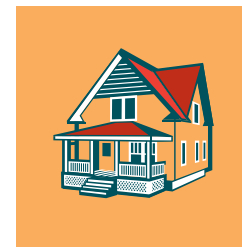
Growing up in the small town of Yarmouth, things were very challenging. It was hard to feel truly accepted, to feel comfortable within my community. I never truly felt like I was understood—always knowing something was missing, so I decided to branch out and try to experience a different perspective. I got involved with a program through Nova Scotia Works to try and learn new skills and become employed, but it was difficult to get to where the program was being held. I had no money, no home, no way to properly take care of myself. After talking to a couple of people, I was informed of an organization called Phoenix and was told to call and see if it was something I thought would be of assistance, so I did.

I called the Phoenix Shelter, spoke to the staff and got an understanding of what they could offer me in the moment and it sounded like exactly what I was looking for.

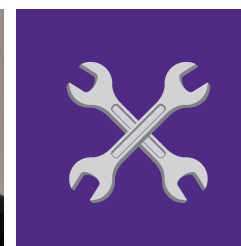
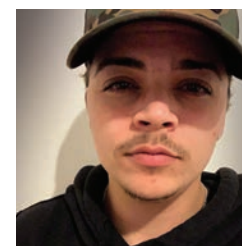
I've been in Halifax for about a year, and in that time my life has changed so much for the good. While staying at the Phoenix Shelter, I got involved with the YESS (Youth Employment and Skills Strategy) program through the Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre, and I took advantage of all the different things that Phoenix had to offer, like a lot of mental health resources.

I learn differently, and school just doesn't work for me. Though the YESS program, I got workplace training. I worked with staff to get a placement at a garage, a place where I've always wanted to work. When I finished my placement, I was taken on as a registered apprentice.

A year from now, I will be in block two of my apprenticeship, putting me closer to reaching my goals of becoming a Red Seal mechanic. And in the next 10 years, I'd like to be running my own shop. So it's really cool, I can do something that I'm good at for eight hours a day, that keeps me busy, and my mental health is the best it's been in a long time. I would say it's good, and that's huge for me.



Phoenix staff encourage me, they see things in me that I don't necessarily see in myself on a daily basis. They get really involved with people, which is great because if they didn't then I definitely wouldn't be in this position today. I would have beaten myself down like I normally do and I would go back to giving up when things don't work out right away.



Phoenix has helped me in so many ways and I am thankful. The blessing I've gotten from the moment I walked through the doors are priceless, they will stick with me for the rest of my life, as I will stick by this organization. To say you helped me follow my path is an understatement. You helped me find acceptance, you helped me to find family, and Phoenix, you helped me to find myself.

Local Support with Long-Term Impact

Local businesses, schools, volunteers, and donors are the backbone of Phoenix, creating the opportunities for us to offer essential supports and services. This support had all the more impact as the COVID-19 pandemic continued to evolve. Here is a look at the ingenuity and creativity some Phoenix friends brought to the table in support of youth.

The Hanlons Live Stream their Support of Phoenix

Anne and Jim Hanlon have been strong Phoenix supporters for many years. Each March they host a St. Patrick's Day party, where friends and family gather to support Phoenix through an auction and a collection of donations. As the first wave of the pandemic locked down Nova Scotia, the Hanlons took their party online, engaging the talented Mike Cowie Quartet and creating a live-stream concert experience for guests. Auction items had already been collected, and the Hanlons saved them for the holidays, creating an online auction and the perfect opportunity for folks to purchase gifts while supporting Phoenix.



Yeni Apparel

Local clothier Yeni Apparel showed how they "love local" when they answered our call for donations of essential items. They gathered donations and engaged supporters through Instagram giveaways with proceeds going to Phoenix resulting in a financial donation along with essential items such as gloves, hats, and socks to keep youth warm in the winter months.

31 Day Dip for Mental Health

It takes a lot of gusto to be willing to dive into the frigid waters of Halifax, but this is how the 31 Day Dip for Mental Health has continued to be an incredible fundraising effort for Phoenix. With restrictions around gathering limits being tightened, group dips would have to wait another year. Nevertheless, the creator of this event, Sid, braved the waters and safely raised more than \$3,000 in "cold" hard cash.

"Sew" Amazing

When Phoenix made a call on social media for donations of homemade masks our incredible community answered us! Donations came from all around. Modern Suiting, a local bespoke menswear retailer, donated hundreds of beautifully tailored masks that staff and youth still rave about. The Facebook group Charity Crafters of HRM also rose to the occasion and donated hundreds more. Further, they crafted special rainbow masks for our youth during Pride Month.



Virtual Programming by Volunteers

The time and talent of Phoenix volunteers is immeasurable. When Phoenix had to make the critical, albeit necessary, decision to suspend in-person volunteering to protect the health of everyone in our community, our volunteers, found new and creative solutions to support youth. Opportunities like online paint tutorials and yoga sessions allowed youth to engage in wellness-based programming, which offered a sense of normalcy and encouraged youth to stay involved.

Knit with Love

At 85 years old, there is little that will hold Dorothea back from supporting Phoenix youth. During the winter months, she hand-knit and donated beautiful scarves and headbands to keep youth warm as the temperatures dropped.



Partners Through the Pandemic and Beyond

Working with corporate partners, both local and beyond, is an integral part of the support we receive throughout the year.

Access Supporting Equity

With the support of our community partners, youth stayed connected to school, work, peers, family, and interests through donations of Chromebooks from Surrogate Technology Management and refurbished laptops through the Association of Workplace Educators of Nova Scotia. As COVID-19 forced the closure of schools, many youth found themselves without devices to stay connected to their classrooms. Not having a device for coursework is an enormous barrier to maintaining grades, but these donations were a step in providing equitable access to technology for all youth.



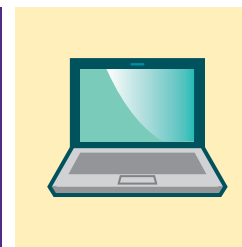
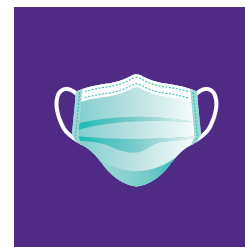
Keeping Clean and Keeping Safe

Maintaining clean surfaces, practising proper hand hygiene, physical distancing, and wearing masks are all now a normal part of our routine. But when the provincial lockdown first began, no one could have anticipated the shortage of cleaning supplies that would hit our local stores. Thankfully, our friends at the Home Depot Foundation recognized that Phoenix would need supplies and made an incredible donation of buckets, disinfectants, cleaning supplies, masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer to help keep Phoenix youth and staff safe and healthy. Compass Distillers also joined in the effort, and gifted litres of hand sanitizer to Phoenix and other organizations in the shelter community.



A Place to Call Home

During the pandemic, the Phoenix Shelter, Phoenix House, and our three Phoenix Homes for Independence became even more essential as they offered a safe place for youth to stay home and shelter in place. As always, we want youth to feel at home and comfortable wherever they may be, and we were grateful to receive additional support from IKEA to help make this happen. Throughout the year, IKEA generously donated hot meals, bed linens, and essential items that helped ensure youth were safe, cozy, and supported in our residential spaces.



Verna Munroe's Legacy of Giving



Verna Munroe was a fun, generous, and kind person with an incredible spirit who was loved and is remembered by so many. Phoenix Youth Programs is grateful to be a part of her legacy of giving.

Verna's son Craig recalls how deeply involved his mother was with volunteering in Lunenburg. He and his sister, Cathy, remember their mother creating a youth group through the Anglican church where their father, Austin, was minister. It was Verna's open and friendly nature that made her group so popular, and that "it wasn't uncommon to see youth from other churches and denominations attend because she made it so fun."



After moving to Halifax, Verna connected with Phoenix and started the Food for Phoenix group where local churches come together to support youth who are dealing with food insecurity. "I'm not surprised she gravitated to Phoenix because her heart was with young people," says Cathy. "She accepted everyone, and it really didn't matter what people's background or current situation was – they were like family."

In July 2013, Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY) dedicated their kitchen in honour of Verna, naming it Verna's Kitchen. She was present for the dedication, accompanied by Craig, Cathy, her daughter-in-law Liz, and granddaughter, Samantha. Verna's Kitchen remains a space where youth in the community can access healthy foods, pantry items, snacks, and more.

She led a life dedicated to supporting youth in recognizing their own value. Verna's devotion to the community and her philanthropic spirit lives on in the example she set for Craig and Cathy. As Phoenix supporters themselves, they continue to honour her life's work and commitment to supporting youth.

Sadly, Verna passed away in August 2013 and her loss was felt across Phoenix, the community, and especially by her loved ones. Craig and Cathy remember the dynamic woman their mother was and speak to a life committed to embracing those around her. They agree, "she instilled that people in the community were important; that everyone should have the ability to have a wonderful life." Liz fondly remembers her mother-in-law, saying, "Her heart and her home were open to everyone."



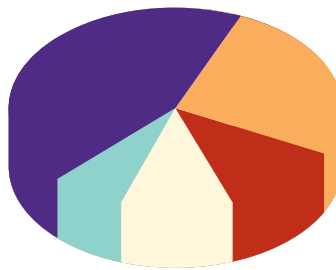
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- 11% Phoenix Signature Events
- 7% Annual Giving

Coming Together in a Year of Challenges



If the past year has taught us anything, it is to believe in the power of our community.

There is no individual, family, or community that has been untouched in this pandemic and year of social change. We watched as strangers and neighbours assisted others beyond their own means and have seen the immense determination of youth as they navigate barrier after barrier to achieve their goals—all of these with the added challenges of sheltering in place, wearing a mask, and physical distancing.

The strength, compassion, and commitment of our friends, volunteers, and supporters make a difference in the work we do every day. We are grateful for your continued support and recognition of the value and potential every youth possesses.

The success we see at Phoenix is the result of your continued care for your community and the youth and families we serve. We thank you for your tremendous generosity and kindness during this challenging year, and we look forward to a time when we can welcome you and our community back into our spaces.



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