



Phoenix

At Phoenix, we acknowledge that it is a privilege to live and work 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 locations in Halifax/Kjipuktuk, 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
-  @PhoenixYouthPrograms
-  @PhoenixHfx
-  PhoenixYouthPrograms

phoenixyouth.ca

Setting the Foundation for Possibilities

The work of Phoenix has been, and always will be, to ensure that the youth and families we serve have the support and opportunities they desire to create a healthy life of their own design.

Helping to facilitate change is tough work at the best of times. The evolving nature of the pandemic imposed increased risk, where measures such as social distancing, lowered capacity, and masking were paramount to sustaining the health and wellbeing of those we serve. With the faith of community and united strength, we pressed forward and adapted to continue to be here for youth in meaningful ways.

The current housing crisis has been notably daunting to navigate. How do young people who are ready to take the next step toward independence, move forward without an affordable dignified place to call home?

One of the highlights of this year was the housing opportunities afforded to Phoenix, enabled by community support, to stretch in order to meet this rising need. I am thrilled to share these innovative initiatives with you, and stories of those who have risen above the odds, in the pages that follow.

The word 'community' means more than a physical space; it is a shared connection and a sense of belonging. Thanks to you, the quality of 'community' at Phoenix continues to be ever present in the most meaningful of ways. As a result of your kindness and generosity, we could continue to thoughtfully connect with youth and be a familiar pillar of support even when physically separated, and despite systemic challenges.

At the front of this work are our staff who are nothing short of inspiring. Their dedication and tireless commitment to meet a level of need greater than we've ever seen before is embraced with passion, heart, and skill, bringing our mandate for social justice to life. As a result, youth and families move forward to new possibilities.

And to you – our partners, donors, supporters, and volunteers; your support has allowed Phoenix to remain an essential resource and ally for youth on their journey. We are endlessly grateful for your investment in our mission. We simply could not be here without you.

As we move into a new year full of opportunity, Phoenix is excited to continue sharing this journey with you. Together may we lay the foundations for positive, transformative change. And together, may we provide a community for youth that is strong in structure and in heart.

I offer you my deepest and most profound thanks,

Timothy Crooks (he/him)
Executive Director



A Place To Be Himself: AJ's Story

"The staff I met at Phoenix House, especially some of the ones I really connected with, celebrated me, and my existence was thought of as important, in ways that it really wasn't before."



Everyone deserves a place where they feel safe and welcome to be themselves. AJ came to Phoenix in search of that community. He couldn't be his authentic self and be accepted in his home environment. He struggled to maintain a façade, holding back on taking steps that would allow him to be his real self. Fortunately, his school's guidance counselor stepped in and connected AJ to Phoenix's Youth Outreach Program (YOP) during his final year of high school.

As a transgender person, AJ knew his health and well-being depended on him finding housing where he could be himself, safely. He worked with Greg, a Phoenix youth outreach worker, and together they identified the Phoenix House residence as a good fit as AJ would have access to emotional supports while learning life skills to prepare him for independent living.

Today, AJ sees his time at Phoenix House as being instrumental to his personal growth. "It gave me the opportunity to grow and get to know myself better, in ways that I hadn't been able to previously," he says. "It put me in an environment where my transness was being celebrated, which was something I was very much not used to, and was very important to my mental health."

Learning how to cook, managing a chore schedule, and participating in programs such as the Phoenix House summer program, where he could explore career options, also provided AJ the chance to identify goals and create a plan for moving forward.

With Phoenix's help and connections to other groups and organizations in the community, AJ expanded his network of support and made friends. A few of them came together, pooling their resources, and were able to secure independent housing. Phoenix supported AJ in this transition to independent living and he continues to stay in contact with the Phoenix House team, checking in periodically to let them know how he is doing and receiving support when needed.

Another new friend shared AJ's love of music and the two eventually formed their own band. Music had been a part of AJ's younger years, having taken lessons while growing up. He and his friend continue to play together now and are currently producing and recording an album of AJ's music.

AJ was accepted to Mount Saint Vincent University for this fall's Women and Gender Studies program, with a goal of eventually earning his Bachelor of

Education degree. He's working with Phoenix Learning & Employment Program to navigate the process and to secure funding for his education. While he hasn't settled on whether elementary or high school would be his preference for teaching, he's looking forward to getting into a classroom and learning.

Looking positively toward his future, AJ envisions many new experiences and possibilities in the next few years. "I want to be finishing up my Education degree. I also hope to be putting more creative projects out into the world at that point. I may also have more interests by then. I want to continue living in Halifax, independently or with roommates. And I'd love to do some travelling. I really want to go to Montreal. Japan has been on my list since I was a kid. And I would really love to go to Germany at some point."

Reflecting on his experiences with Phoenix, AJ shares, "The connections I have made with staff at Phoenix and the moments I have had with the staff are connections and moments I don't think I will ever be forgetting. Some of them have been very meaningful, impactful, and influential. I don't think I would be the person I am today without having met some of these people. While Phoenix

does great, great work, I think part of what makes Phoenix important, in addition to their work, is the connections. The staff I met at Phoenix House, especially some of the ones I really connected with, celebrated me, and my existence was thought of as important, in ways that it really wasn't before. It wasn't just parts of me that was celebrated or thought important, but all of me."

Programs that support

AJ's journey are made

possible by supporters like

The RBC Foundation and

The Flemming Charitable

Foundation.

Shelter Built on a Foundation of Trust

*The thoughtful approach
Phoenix brings to our work
is made possible thanks to
the support of donors like
Campbell Webster Foundation,
The McLean Foundation and
The Grocery Foundation.*



Youth arriving at the doors of the Phoenix Youth Shelter can expect to be welcomed without judgment and offered the resources and supports they need. Designed for youth ages 16 to 24, the shelter accommodates 20 beds, each in its own private room. Youth are offered three meals a day as well as snacks, and have access to amenities such as laundry and showers.

Though these fundamental resources are crucial, Phoenix Youth Shelter manager Janel says the service the shelter team provides goes far beyond four walls and a roof. Staff focus on building a foundation of trust with each youth by getting to know their individual needs and situations.

"It's really trying to figure out what it is that brought the youth to our doors and what they need to find a more stable housing option, and to reach that next step by connecting them with supports," says Janel.

This personalized care is made possible in-part by the shelter's unique residence system. "We are a lot different than most other shelters in that youth do not re-register nightly when they're with us. They're initially given a stay of 56 days, and if they need more time to reach the next step they're able to be extended," says Janel.

Each youth at the shelter is also paired with a keyworker who handles their case management support. This arrangement ensures that youth have a person they can rely on to listen and to connect them to services that they need.

"We know that youth are unique, and their goals are unique. What's good for one youth is not going to be a good fit for somebody else," says Janel, in reference to the broad range of supports shelter keyworkers connect youth to. "We have a mental health nurse who visits three days a week, so she's able to chat with youth about all things mental health. We also have an addictions counselor from the IWK who visits once a week to help youth who are struggling with addiction."

Janel says that the Phoenix Youth Shelter also works closely with other programs within Phoenix so youth can be supported in education and employment opportunities, as well as helped to transition to their next stage of housing.

In addition to meeting youth where they are in their personal journeys and supporting their next steps, the Phoenix Youth Shelter team also provides recreational programs to brighten the day. Crafts, movie nights, and outdoor games are a few of the activities youth enjoy.

This approach of leading with heart and individualized support has proven successful. "We definitely get feedback from youth that if, unfortunately, a housing situation disintegrates, this is where they feel supported to come back to," says Janel. "Phoenix is where they feel the safest or they have the most privacy, and where they have relationships with staff. Not just to have a bed for the night and not just to have meals for the day, but to have somebody listen to them and take an interest in their life and help them. And youth know that no matter what happened between their last day and now, they're always going to find no judgment."

Holidays in a Hotel

A testament to this foundation that staff have built with youth can be seen in the touching story of when the Phoenix Youth Shelter temporarily relocated to a hotel during the holiday season.

All staff and youth moved to the hotel on two separate occasions: the first being a precautionary measure in the face of rising COVID-19 cases in the broader community, and the second a response to positive cases becoming present within Phoenix Youth Programs. Janel says the moves came with their own challenges, but staff innovated supports to make sure youth were able to stay engaged while protecting the health and safety of everyone.

"In some ways there were positives that came out of the hotel stays," says Janel. "It gave the staff a lot more time to have intentional conversations with youth, to connect with them and to help manage their anxieties. Some of the youth got to sleep in a king-sized bed for the first time in their lives, which they were very excited about."

The timing of the first temporary move also meant that youth and staff spent the holidays in the hotel. "We had goodies that the youth got to open on Christmas morning. They all sat in their doorways and they opened their presents kind of as a group, socially distanced but together."

In Isolation, But Never Alone

Even in times when youth had to self-isolate in their hotel rooms, the team went above and beyond to be there for them, says Janel. Staff members organized a snack trolley that visited each youth's room, invented ways to play board games or create crafts socially distanced, and made sure any necessary resources were made available to youth within their hotel rooms.

"At the end of the day," says Janel, "everybody was safe, everybody had shelter, and we were able to maintain a level of staffing and support, and successfully move back into our space."

Whether it be in a hotel or in the shelter location, the Phoenix Youth Shelter team remains committed to their mission of putting youth first and providing supports based in shared humanity, dignity, and heart. "We're always here to help them figure out where they've been and where they're going next," says Janel. "It's a place to catch your breath and we'll help with all the rest."



Staff members surprised youth with a snack trolley to bring some sweetness to the group's isolation time.



Crafting Community Connection

"The chance to at least connect with the youth on a curb outside their home went a long way to keeping youth engaged and giving us an insight into how they were really doing."



Throughout the pandemic, our basic need for community and trust has become more prominent as necessary health protocols decreased socializing to keep our communities safe. However, connection and community outreach is at the core of Phoenix's work. For this reason, Phoenix staff modified outreach efforts to maintain and build connections with youth and families during this time of heightened loneliness and isolation.

From the outset of COVID-19, the team at Phoenix Centre for Youth (PCFY) knew outreach would be crucial. Prior to the pandemic, many services were offered on a drop-in basis with approximately 30 youth physically accessing PCFY supports each day. The pandemic required staff to put drop-in style supports on hold, but this didn't slow the team down. Staff connected with youth by phone, virtual platforms, or social media, and recognized that the immediate needs were the basic essentials – food, personal care, and cleaning products – as well as human connection. With support from Phoenix Youth Outreach Program (YOP) staff, PCFY began delivering food and care boxes directly to youth.

These deliveries gave staff the opportunity to support essential needs while connecting and checking in with youth in a meaningful way. "The chance to at least connect with the youth on a curb outside their home went a long way to keeping youth engaged

and giving us insight into how they were really doing," says Marsha, Phoenix's housing support worker. "Those visits help me understand the well-being of the youth and can provide early signs as to whether a youth is struggling."

This in-person outreach—even if socially distanced and masked—was critical for youth. Although staff used phone calls and virtual meetings where possible, many youth lacked a private space where they felt safe to speak freely. Outreach staff also made it a priority to meet with youth living in outlying communities where access to adequate Internet service is minimal.

Knowing the importance of in-person support, Phoenix staff continually adjusted outreach strategies to best meet the individual needs of youth. For instance, youth outreach worker Alana says that the way she connected with youth would drastically change based on health regulations surrounding public spaces, such as capacity limits or the removal of seating. "There were many occasions where I would be meeting with a youth in a parking lot or park, even in the middle of winter, trying to fill out forms, engage in supportive conversations, or identify needs," she says.

Phoenix's commitment to keeping youth connected to support was present across the agency. Located in Mulgrave Park, The Phoenix Youth & Community

Centre (PYCC), which hosts activities and support programs with and for the community, also saw the need to bolster its outreach in the last year, says Carla, a community outreach worker at PYCC. "We wanted to assure them that we weren't closing and weren't leaving. Phoenix was still here," she says.

"We took our list of supported individuals and divided it up amongst our team. Each of us would make weekly phone calls to those individuals to find out how they were doing, were there specific challenges they were navigating, and was there anything they needed."

Sustaining this community connection was crucial at PYCC. "The sense of community comes from the connection of people. Walking through the Park, waving, and having conversations was no longer our reality," says Carla. "It was necessary for us at PYCC to pivot into finding new ways to connect."

PYCC shifted youth and adult programming online, hosted Zoom bingos, offered veggie boxes, and delivered art supplies for online paint nights on doorsteps. "Doing a Zoom bingo where for the first 20 minutes the community members are chattering back and forth, you have 25 or 30 people that maybe haven't had a chance to see each other because we've been told not to, and now they are all online together and having that opportunity. They are getting their connection in a different way. And

being able to witness that and facilitate that is a really beautiful thing," says Carla.

Phoenix's commitment to meeting youth and families where they are took on a much more literal meaning throughout the past year. While it wasn't always easy or straightforward, the trusting and meaningful relationships that have been nurtured illustrate the resilience of Phoenix team members and those Phoenix has the pleasure to serve.

*Support from amazing
groups like the Halifax
Assistance Fund
help us keep
connected with youth
and communities!*

Building Solutions Across the Housing Continuum

At Phoenix, the youth we support represent a continuum of personal experiences, and we believe in meeting each youth where they are on their journey. That includes helping them find a safe and affordable place to live, which is why our housing programs are also set along what’s known as “the housing continuum.”

“The concept of the housing continuum is about providing the right type of housing for youth at the right time, and allows them to transition to the next part of their journey,” says Rob, senior director of residential programs. At one end of the housing continuum sits emergency housing, such as the Phoenix Youth Shelter, which provides a safe place for unhoused youth in crisis, and is followed by several Phoenix residential programs that provide the necessary supports to help youth transition from shelter living to housing with live-in supports, and eventually to full-time independent living.

“We also talk about employment, education, mental health, and all the supports that are required to help support a person transition from Phoenix residential spaces and plan for the future,” says Rob. “Our housing programs focus on providing supports and resources that support the whole person.”

This approach has been successful, whether it be in a linear process or in a circular, flexible manner. However, Rob says the external housing market has created new barriers in the last few years, and what was a smoother journey has almost come to a stop.

The reason is both simple and complicated. The absence of affordable housing has made youth in transitional periods less able to secure housing. “We’re seeing youth staying in our programs longer because there’s no exit into market housing,” says Rob. “If you look at some of the affordable housing being built, they call it affordable but it’s not affordable for the folks we’re working with. Or conversely, the stock is such that I wouldn’t call it dignified.”

This pressure of rising market prices is also felt across the housing continuum. As youth are unable to transition from Phoenix housing to market rental housing, their stays in Phoenix housing gets extended. According to Rob, Phoenix housing programs are now supporting youth for over two to three years, while the average stay was previously one year. This delay results in a chain reaction of youth closer to the start of the housing continuum unable to transition into or through Phoenix programs due to lack of space.

Youth at the beginning stages of the housing continuum also face a lack of options while staying at the Phoenix Shelter for Youth. Reports show that approximately 16 per cent of youth staying at the shelter are working full-time or

near full-time hours. “Even with full-time hours, working at a minimum wage, they can’t afford housing,” says Rob. Despite these unsettling circumstances, Rob says Phoenix is prepared to expand to meet new demands and continue its mission of ensuring youth have access to safe, affordable, and dignified housing.

“I would say our next journey is to explore what it means for Phoenix to be involved in the later stages of the housing continuum,” says Rob.

With the support of The Community Housing Transformation Centre, Phoenix completed the “Phoenix Bedrock Project: Housing for Youth Research and Modelling Study” to document substantial research and recommendations into alternate housing models. Phoenix is currently adopting some of these models to provide the missing step of the continuum that’s been closed off due to skyrocketing housing prices.

One approach Phoenix is considering is known as “rent geared income (RGI)”. RGI is a rental structure that determines rent prices based on a percentage of an individual’s income, rather than market pricing. Rob says that while the long-standing recommendation is 30 per cent, some youth are currently paying 90 per cent of their income or more under market-priced rent.

“When you’re spending all your income on housing, your time is then always involved in a chase to get the rest of your basic needs. That’s not where we want to be,” says Rob. “We want folks to be able to think about going to school, finding employment, or involving themselves in their community.”

Phoenix was able to create more housing opportunities on the latter end of the housing continuum thanks to two new supportive housing programs developed in the past year. The first is fondly referred to as Creighton Street House and is geared toward supporting young families. A bright family home, the Creighton Street House program offers a youth with children a home to live in, raise their family, and fulfill educational goals while receiving Phoenix wrap-around supports. The program has had one family living in the home since September 2021 and has shown tremendous success.

The second program, called Student Housing on West (SHOW), will offer affordable housing to three post-secondary students throughout their years of study. With many students facing homelessness and housing insecurity, this program plans to remove the barrier of housing costs to assist students in completing their studies. SHOW plans to launch in the summer of 2022 and has many applicants from students for the fall 2022 semester.

The need and demand for affordable housing programs such these show us that Phoenix is moving in the right direction by providing housing solutions on the outer sides of the housing continuum.

“The continuum works,” says Rob, “and the way we want to grow our continuum and move forward will allow youth to thrive and not just survive.”

Read more about Creighton Street House and Student Housing on West on pages 12 and 13.

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM

The Housing Continuum art concept is property of CMHC. Its use in this report is to highlight Phoenix’s programs and impact.



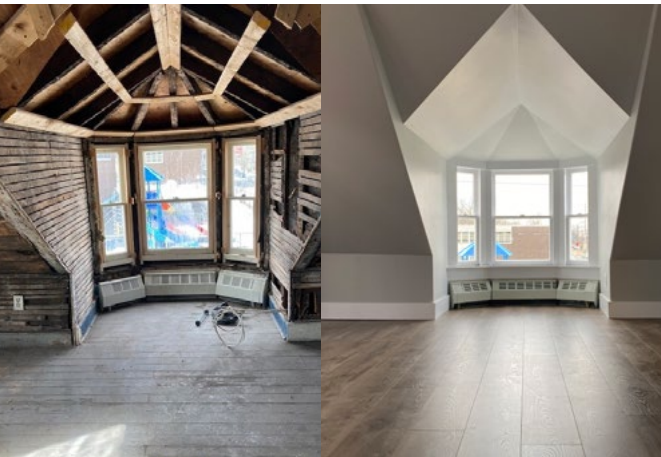
Addressing Affordable Housing

The housing crisis continues to have a severe impact on the well-being of youth, their families, and wider communities. Phoenix is always ready to act and be a part of innovative solutions, that's why we've expanded our housing strategy and created two new housing programs: Creighton Street House, a family home to support youth with children, and Student Housing on West (SHOW), an affordable housing option for students in post-secondary.

Creighton Street House

Raising a family can be a real juggling act as parents try to balance work, finances, and possibly their own education while providing for their families. Many of the youth we work with at Phoenix are no strangers to this reality and have increasingly been met with more barriers, says associate director of residential programs, Michelle.

"A lot of our young parents struggle to continue on a trajectory of life of getting an education and being able to acquire affordable housing, all with young children in tow," says Michelle.



Phoenix was in the midst of brainstorming new solutions for these young families when the opportunity arose to acquire the Creighton Street House, thanks to the generosity of St. Paul's Home. Previously cared for by the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and other dedicated community groups, the Creighton Street House was the perfect family home.

"We thought, this will be a great place where we can remove some of those challenges of finding affordable housing, so the youth can focus on their children, school goals, and finances, and move forward to thrive," says Michelle.

Construction to revamp the house into a home was set into motion with the support of private donors, and the Creighton Street House program was developed

alongside it. Set in a two-storey house with three bedrooms, a finished attic, and yard, the Creighton Street House program offers a home to a young family to live in with full wraparound supports as the youth completes their education goals and prepares for the future.

"The design was to ensure that every area that the youth needs support in would be supported," says Michelle. With a focus on education, a case manager is assigned to help the youth reach their education, financial, and employment goals and to ensure they can achieve their vision of success once they depart from the program.

Rent is also based on the youth's income rather than standard market pricing. This form of affordable housing helps provide immediate stability for the youth as well as the opportunity for future financial planning, says Christine, director of community programs. "When the majority of their income isn't going to rent, the youth is going to be able to start building some savings where they previously couldn't. When the time comes for the family to transition, they'll have funds to support personal goals, an education fund for their children, or so on."

This ability to build a strong launching pad for the future will have a positive impact on the parent's life as well as their children's. "We know about the generational impact of poverty and homelessness and getting caught in a cycle of the child welfare system or the income assistance cycle," says Christine. "The program gives them a solid foundation to meet those personal milestones and have stability."

The current, and very first, family living in the Creighton Street House is thriving in a beautiful way. The youth is studying for her degree in nursing with her two young children happily attending school in their neighborhood. Phoenix is looking forward to the next few years as the family blossoms and leaves positive memories in the home for the next family.

Student Housing on West (SHOW)

Phoenix has been honoured to help hundreds of youth access post-secondary financial support through bursary programs, grant applications, and achieving scholarships. However, the housing crisis and rising cost of living have placed increasing financial pressure on students attempting to further their education.

"We have folks set up for school coming to us saying 'This is great. I'm ready for this step, but I don't have a place to live.' " says associate director of residential programs, Michelle. With the lack of affordable housing that is safe and dignified, many students can't afford rent while attending school. Michelle also mentions an increase in international students who are unable to access housing. Paired with disproportionately high tuition costs, many services are not available to youth who don't have permanent Canadian citizen status.

These growing barriers compelled Phoenix to launch Student Housing on West (SHOW). Located in a three-bedroom house, the program will house three post-secondary students throughout the entirety of their respective school programs. "We removed the barrier of that housing aspect so that they can solely focus on their education moving forward," says Michelle.

An additional year of housing at SHOW will also be provided as a transition time for youth to secure meaningful employment.

"The additional year will help youth focus on the transition to the workplace, labour market, or establish career development goals," says Christine, director of community programs. "We're offering them that continued foundation and support to bridge them to living independently and thriving."



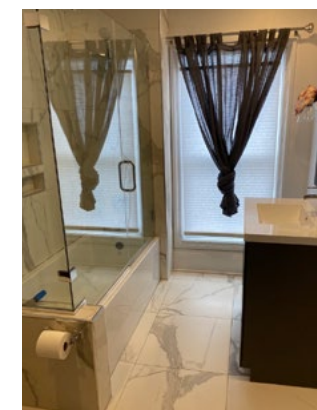
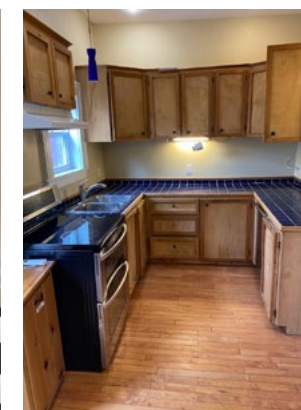
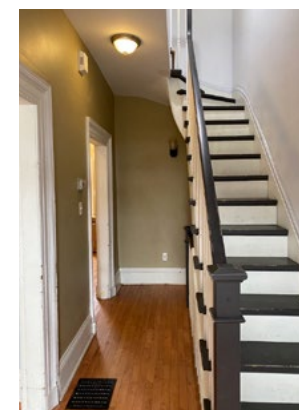
Having the security of living at SHOW for multiple years is significant in of itself, says Christine. Feedback from a housing clinic indicated that many students are pushed to move housing each year due to rental increases or discontinued leases. "They can't even focus on trying to gain employment in the summertime to prep themselves for September because they're trying to find another place to live."

Youth at SHOW will have access to full wraparound supports and a case manager they can lean on. Some of the supports that will be available based on each youth's unique needs include educational support, housing management, mental health outreach, financial education, and mitigating challenges as they arise.

The program is also an opportunity for youth to build independent living skills in a supported environment. Students will be charged an affordable rent based on 30 per cent or less of their income. "The intent there is to build those muscles around being a renter and understanding the budgeting and planning process," says Christine.

SHOW will house its first group of students in the summer of 2022, and Phoenix is excited to see the program's impact come to life in this needed time. "If we place folks in a place where they're fully supported and remove some of those barriers, we're going to see people meeting their goals," says Michelle. "That is the ultimate goal, to see them find parts of themselves they couldn't before because they were completely overwhelmed with so many other things."

Acquiring the SHOW property at no cost was a profound display of community support that will open the doors to possibilities for youth for years to come, says Christine. "The impact of what you do today will have impact immediately and it will have an impact down the road and may even impact those youth when they're in a position to help."



Together is the Place to Be

Through the year, staff and youth work together to navigate and overcome barriers. An important part of this journey is making space for special moments of fun and celebration. The Phoenix Youth & Community Centre (PYCC) in Mulgrave Park works with the community to offer youth opportunities to boost their confidence, build relationships, and connect to their communities and cultures. Join us for a few of the many moments of joy that youth experienced at Phoenix this year!

Recognizing the Phoenix Class of 2021

Staff and youth were excited to start the summer celebrating after 23 youth graduated from middle school and high school last June. This included 13 students graduating from grade 9 and heading off to high school, and 10 students graduating from high school. To celebrate this milestone, grade 9 students from Highland Park Junior High School and Oxford School received pizza from the Kin Club of Halifax for a fun pizza party. PYCC also treated all graduates and their families to dinner from a local business as well as a giftbag of stuffies and photo memories. Graduation is a special time to celebrate youth as they move forward in their educational goals and feel pride in their achievements.



Spread the Love

Youth from Mulgrave Park were happy to get back out into the community to Spread the Love! Previously put on hold for health and safety measures, the August Spread the Love campaign was a huge success with youth once again hand delivering candy grams packed with positive notes for neighbours. It was a much-needed time for community connection and the youth were there to lift their neighbours' spirits!



Halloween Hangouts

The Youth Outreach Program (YOP) team and PYCC came together to offer youth a spooky Halloween-filled weekend in October. Mask painting paired with a pizza party and treats was followed up by a Halloween movie screening with a haunted house done in partnership with the Mulgrave Park Caring and Learning Centre. The youth had a great time getting into the Halloween spirit together with some screams and laughter.



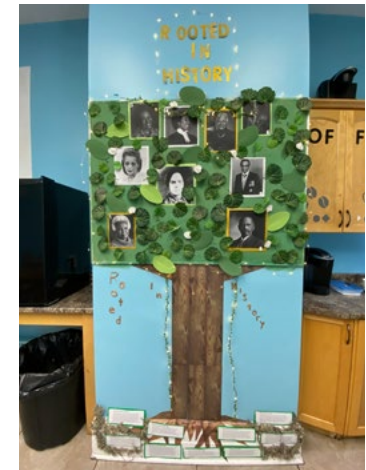
Bringing the Holidays Home

Community members of Mulgrave Park enjoyed delicious holiday turkey dinners on behalf of PYCC. The remarkable PYCC staff and volunteers prepared 210 delicious meals and hand-delivered them throughout the community to bring the holidays home for youth and their families. Of the 210 meals, 67 were halal made specially for Muslim families within the community. This was the largest meal sharing event that PYCC has achieved and shows the strength of community connection in Mulgrave Park.



Celebrating African Heritage Month

Activities for African Heritage Month were in full swing throughout February. Youth and staff worked together in beautiful ways to learn and celebrate the diverse African cultures within our communities. PYCC organized engaging AHM programming with youth through lunch-and-learns, meals from Black-owned restaurants, window displays, clever art installations, and a youth art exhibition. Phoenix is honoured to celebrate the diversity of the communities we serve and is especially proud to see youth bringing their own celebrations forward.



*PYCC is thankful to have
mutual community
support from groups like
A. Mary Holmes Trust
and The Charles Johnson
Charitable Fund.*

Self-compassion as Strength: Jimmy's Story

"Phoenix has always made me feel welcome and more like a family. I never really had anything similar to that, especially where they accommodate mental health. They've done a lot for me."



Jimmy is the sort of person who stays late to close up the worksite so his co-workers can head home early. Thoughtful and ready to lookout for people, Jimmy says he's been responsible for taking care of others for most of his life.

As a child, Jimmy filled the role of a caregiver for his single mother when she entered her 60s. He also worked near full-time hours throughout high school to help with household finances. Although Jimmy brings this caring nature into young adulthood, now, at 22 years old, his childhood involved more responsibility than a youth can be ready for.

"I was taking care of my 67-year-old mom, making sure she was taking her medicine and basically being a stay-at-home-nurse but also her son," says Jimmy. "That was one of the reasons why sometimes I couldn't get to high school because I was worried about leaving my mom and not being able to get back to her if I needed to."

The pressure from these responsibilities caused heightened levels of stress for Jimmy and he sought support from his school's guidance counsellor in grade 12. After meeting with the counsellor for some time, Jimmy says he requested a referral to a therapist.

"It was me realizing that I needed an outside source besides a guidance counsellor. It didn't really seem to be working with them saying to come every three weeks and we talk about how my schoolwork is doing," he says.

It was with Jimmy's initiative and the following referral that his journey with Phoenix Youth Programs began. He was introduced to Becka, a clinical therapist at the Phoenix

Youth and Family Therapy (PYFT) program, and the two collaboratively started to build a foundation of trust. Jimmy found space to unpack and honour his difficult feelings and experiences during his sessions with Becka and began to develop a new understanding of himself and the problems he's faced.

Jimmy says the emotional support and understanding he received from PYFT has made a monumental impact. "Having the outlet and ability to have that conversation with Becka is huge," he says. "Becka telling me that the things I'm going through may not be 'normal' or may be unique to me but that they don't make me different or unlovable. The things I'm going through are hard and it's okay to admit they're hard."

Prioritizing mental health was a new approach for Jimmy. "I came from a family that didn't want me to experience mental health as what it was. They would dismiss it as me making a big deal," he says. Jimmy further internalized this stigma at 14 years old after a negative experience with a crisis mental health support. In response to his distress regarding a traumatic event, a practitioner diagnosed Jimmy with adjustment disorder — a diagnosis that describes one's reaction to a stressful event as excessive or unhealthy. This feedback led Jimmy to view his emotions as improper responses to difficult situations. "I didn't really feel like I was being heard," he says. "It kind of led me to neglect my emotions and think I'm not adjusting properly. That I'm not doing things I'm supposed to be doing."

Jimmy is proud to share that he's learned to validate his experiences and emotions throughout his time meeting with Becka. "Before, I honestly wasn't giving myself the

space and time to be gentle with myself," Jimmy says. "Now when I'm having a mental health problem, I don't think I've got to stop doing or feeling this. I'm softer with myself and give myself space to have those moments."

Building this foundation of support and self-compassion has helped Jimmy believe in his ability to process difficult times in his life. In August 2021, he experienced the tremendous loss of his mother. In the midst of his grief, he was also responsible for arranging his late mother's finances and celebration of life. However, despite all this, Jimmy was able to rely on his new outlook and open himself to fully feeling the process.

"When my mom passed away, I felt like it was a chance to really do it the appropriate way and not suppress and repress all the emotions I had," he says. "I want to work through this process now because I saw the side effects of pushing it off and letting it build."

Being able to rely on Becka for support during this time also helped Jimmy continue navigating the complexities of grief.

"I'm a mechanical and logistical kind of person. I want something to have a proper way to fix it because it makes it easier. So with grief or mental illness I'm always asking 'Where's the blueprint?' " Jimmy says. "Becka was very much like a rock for me and helped coach me through, reminding me there is no blueprint and that my process or feelings aren't incorrect. Just hearing that made it feel a lot easier."

Jimmy is currently living independently. He is a favourite member of his construction crew and is known for his dedication. Jimmy says his mother's absence is a significant

adjustment, and for the time being he is comfortable being open to multiple possibilities for the future. "It's hard to say what I'm going to be doing in a year or two. I kind of like leaving it open and just seeing where things will be."

Planning for the future was a task Jimmy struggled to fit on his already full plate of graduating high school, working full time, and caring for his mother. Becka connected him with the Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre (PLEC) to offer support in this area. The Phoenix team supported Jimmy with updating his resume and cover letter, searching for jobs, and preparing for interviews. Jimmy fully engaged in this process and secured full-time employment in his area of interest in the construction sector. To assist in financial planning, Jimmy also worked with the Phoenix trustee worker to begin planning long-term financial goals.

As of now, Jimmy is considering a heavy-duty mechanics program which would involve his two favourite aspects of his current job. In the last year, Phoenix supported Jimmy in passing Young Drivers to qualify for this program and other potential work opportunities that require a licence.

Jimmy now embraces the fact that there isn't a blueprint for everything. He continues to move forward with intention and care for others but now places equal value on himself and his own well-being. As part of this care, Jimmy continues to regularly meet with Becka at PYFT.

"Phoenix has always made me feel welcome and more like a family. I never really had anything similar to that, especially where they accommodate mental health. They've done a lot for me."

Thriving Through Community

Phoenix is lucky to have friends and neighbours who support our community in creative ways. Local organizing initiatives are at the heart of Phoenix and our ability to create opportunities for youth. Here is a small sample of the dedicated groups that continue to come together to support youth.

5 Days with Post-secondary Students

For a remarkable ninth year in a row, the Dalhousie Commerce Society showed their dedication to safe, dignified housing for all by participating in the 5 Days Campaign, a national campaign run by the Canadian Association of Business Students. For five nights in March, participating students slept outdoors to draw attention to youth homelessness in our communities and raise funds for Phoenix Youth Programs.



This year's initiative was also made special by a first-time collaboration between neighbouring post-secondary institutions. St. Mary's Commerce Society and a few passionate Nova Scotia Community College students joined Dalhousie by organizing their own mix of virtual sleepers and fundraising initiatives. "It was wonderful having St. Mary's University partner with us for the first time this year," says Tiffany, VP External for Dal Commerce Society. "The more people involved means the more exposure we have to educating and bringing awareness." Phoenix is honoured to partner with this collaboration by youth for youth, and we look forward to seeing how the students will grow their advocacy together across campuses!

With a new record of over \$11 thousand raised, the students have collectively raised over \$80 thousand to support unhoused youth over the past nine years!



Rocky Lake Elementary School

Janique Caseley's grade 6 class at Rocky Lake Elementary used imagination and invention to collect donations for Phoenix with their handcrafted cardboard arcade. After building working arcade games, the students invited their peers from other classes to play in exchange for donations of personal care items. Any cash donations were later used to purchase cinch bags and bath towels, items that are always in need at Phoenix residential and drop-in spaces.

"We wanted to share some love from children to children in our community, to let them know that we care. We think that the staff at Phoenix Youth Programs are doing important work, and we wanted to show our support," says Janique. We're delighted to see youth wanting to get involved in community support and are happy to see educators like Janique nurturing their giving spirit.



Back-to-School Champions

Youth at Phoenix started the school year with their best foot forward thanks to community members whose donations brought the Phoenix Back-to-School Drive to a new level. Over 70 youth received a brand-new backpack filled with essential supplies, as well as gift cards to cover the costs of new clothes and the ever-important "first-day outfit." Donations from individual supporters and groups such as Manulife Financial, Macdonald Apartments, and New Horizons Baptist Church give an amazing confidence boost to youth and alleviate financial barriers to help youth enjoy the fun and learning of school.

Holiday Stocking Stuffers

Although Phoenix couldn't host its annual holiday celebration with youth due to COVID-19 health protocols, staff and supporters leaned into the holiday spirit to make the season special. Generous donations from community members helped Phoenix staff and volunteers hand stuff over 250 stockings for youth with presents. On top of gifts like candy, gloves, notebooks, and full-sized body wash, 70 children's books were given to the children of youth connected with Phoenix. Youth were also excited to receive gift cards, and many shared that they planned to use leftover card funds to purchase presents for others.

We're thankful for the appreciation and trust that community members such as the Bedford Book Club, the Bedford United Church, and Bed Bath & Beyond have for the work being done at Phoenix that helps us make the season bright for youth.



The Bedford United Church gave an amazing set of donations to Phoenix! Phoenix is always grateful to count on their support each year during the holidays.

Coming Together for Youth at Phoenix's Signature Events

Events continue to be a wonderful chance to connect with and thank Phoenix's community of supporters. Although new in some ways, these beloved signature events carried the same spirit of community and safely served over 1,300 guests in support of youth and their families at Phoenix Youth Programs. We are endlessly grateful for this level of contribution and participation that continues to support Phoenix in providing transformative community services to youth.

Dreamscape Al Fresco

Dreamscape, presented by MacFarlane's Industrial and Micco Companies, was enjoyed this year in al fresco style with delicious spring-themed meals. Families, colleagues, and bubbled friends were able to safely come together to receive to-go picnic meals in support of youth in our communities. The event also had a special Phoenix touch as some of the delicious offerings on the menu were prepared by the talented Janie Bogardus, a Phoenix Youth Programs alumnus.

The continued success of events like Dreamscape is possible because of the generosity of our community and partners. Although 2021 marked the final iteration of Dreamscape, we look forward to inviting our supporters along to a reimagined 2023 spring event that promises to continue to engage our community in meaningful and impactful ways.



Phoenix Holiday Luncheon Best of Both

Presented by RBC Wealth Management and Dominion Securities, the Phoenix Holiday Luncheon was a beautiful celebration as the Phoenix community reunited in-person for the first time since the global pandemic. Seated with friends, family, and loved ones at the spacious Halifax Convention Centre, guests enjoyed a delicious three-course meal, the musical talent of Reeny Smith, and the chance to take home an exciting raffle prize from one of our many contributors.

The show was stolen by Sophia, 18, a youth connected with Phoenix who spoke earnestly to the strength and support she received from Phoenix Youth Programs. Sophia's speech was further complimented by her stunning singing performance of "Hallelujah," which received a much deserved standing ovation.

This Phoenix Holiday Luncheon was also a special "Best of Both" hybrid event to connect with supporters from a distance. In line with Phoenix's value of accessibility, the Phoenix Holiday Luncheon Best of Both brought back the successful take-and-bake holiday meals that purchasers picked up without contact and enjoyed in their own way. "To-go" participants were also treated to a recording of the in-person event, courtesy of Encore.



Excerpts from Sophia's Speech at the Phoenix Holiday Luncheon Best of Both 2021

My name is Sophia and I have been working with Phoenix for about 4 years. I am 18 years old. I am biracial with my dad from Cuba and my mom from Newfoundland. I started therapy at Phoenix in 2017.

My dad passed away from prostate cancer when I was 13 years old, in 2016. This was a very difficult time because my dad and I got really close the year before he died. So his passing was hard because I felt like not only did I lose my dad but now I have a hole in my heart that will never be filled. That realization killed me and I still have very hard times with his absence.

We had financial struggles due to my mom now being a single mom, and trying to make ends meet was a challenge. I was also struggling with my identity after losing my dad. I was struggling with both physical and verbal bullying in junior high school because of my race. I felt like I had no support at school, one less parent at home and no close friends to talk to.

My mom suggested therapy and signed me up at Phoenix Youth & Family Therapy in 2017. Since then I've gotten immense support! Phoenix stepped in to help out on many occasions, especially Christmas. The first Christmas was the worst so to make my next Christmas better, Phoenix provided gift cards for gifts and family dinner to my mom.

My dad was the main person to help me with my hair. I didn't know how to look after it. Phoenix gave me a free hair appointment with a black hairstylist and they gave me products to bring home to help me out.

To also help with my passion for singing, Phoenix paid for one year of choir. When the bullying at school had gotten really bad and I was struggling to find a reason to go to school, my therapist had a discussion with my principal and vice-principal about how to properly deal with the bullies.

Also due to my dad's passing, my mom and I needed help finding our relationship without my dad. So my therapist suggested a few family sessions so my mom and I could sort through everything together. All of this support has helped me grow into the person I am today. I have never been more thankful. When I got to high school, I finally had a chance to excel and start working towards finding, forgiving and loving myself. I had GPAs of 90 and above and I was really enjoying school.

I am now a student working towards a Bachelor of Music degree. I won over \$40,000 in scholarships including the Sankofa Scholarship for Black students of Caribbean descent worth \$32,000 and distributed over 4 years! I am thriving because I am doing what makes me happy and even though I still have struggles, I am still here and I have the strength to get through them. I am so incredibly grateful for Phoenix and I want to thank everyone here for listening to a part of my journey! In the words of Maya Angelou, "People will forget what you said. People will forget what you did. But people will never forget how you made them feel."

Sophia's speech encapsulates the importance of community support and how removing barriers reveals possibilities.



Take 30 for Phoenix

Phoenix was happy to launch the inaugural year of our signature third-party fundraiser, Take 30!

Rooted in the simple but punchy tagline “1 Activity. 30 Days. 30 Minutes. 1 Finish Line,” Take 30 is a peer-to-peer fundraiser where participants choose one activity to do for thirty minutes each day for thirty days. For every day that someone conquers their Take 30 challenge, they also receive support from friends, family, colleagues, or employers in the form of a donation to Phoenix Youth Programs. With any and all activities on the table, like running, reading, skating, or painting, Take 30 is a great way for people to focus on their well-being every day while raising supports for youth!



Phoenix is incredibly grateful to have the support from a diverse range of individuals, groups, and businesses. For this reason, no two Take 30 campaigns look the same. This concept is designed to be straightforward and adaptable to fit any niche and our first participants are stellar examples of this flexibility.

RBC

RBC took to raising funds with a fun, competitive edge as participating employees were divided into Take 30 teams based on branch locations. Each team set fundraising goals in the hopes of out-raising the other teams. RBC employees took part in a range of activities, like reading and spin classes, while receiving donations from their peers. One employee even built and tended to their own garden beds every day!

RBC also maximized their total gift by matching their employees' fundraising through their company giving program, which converts employee volunteer hours to donations. Congratulations and a huge thank you to all RBC participants!

AXIS

Axis employees also hit the ground running in their Take 30 with a lead gift contributed from the head of the organization. With a portion of their fundraising goal being met by Axis, the highly motivated Take 30 participants fundraised with incredible effort and beat their goal of \$10,000. Thank you, members of the Axis Team, for your hard work and for demonstrating how peer-to-peer fundraising, combined with employee-match programs, can create lasting impact for youth and families.

Dalhousie Holiday Helpers

A small but mighty team of students, the Dal Holiday Helpers, brought their Take 30 to Dalhousie Campus through a series of small fundraising events and daily activities. From February to March, efforts like organizing raffles and baking for bake sales were supported by peers through donations. The Dal Holiday Helpers' creative approach to their Take 30 raised important funds to help youth overcome barriers and access opportunities.

Phoenix is grateful for all this year's Take 30 third-party participants and the many more who have already shown interest in hosting their own Take 30 in 2022! Our third-party fundraisers are integral to Phoenix's work and prove that when communities come together anything is possible.



One dedicated RBC team member tended to their homemade garden beds every day to raise funds for Phoenix.

*Take 30 is a great
opportunity for community
groups to organize
independently or businesses
with dollar-match programs
to double their impact!*

Partnerships Making an Impact

Phoenix is privileged to partner with businesses that show they care. These relationships, both local and beyond, help people make a difference in the lives of youth while supporting businesses in their community.

The Orange Door Campaign, Home Depot Canada Foundation

The Home Depot Canada Foundation supports organizations that are committed to preventing and ending youth homelessness. The Foundation has been a long-time friend and partner to Phoenix and their support has helped the Phoenix Learning & Employment Centre connect hundreds of youth with job opportunities, internships, education bursaries, and more. The foundation has also offered nearly a decade of support for building maintenance and repairs that ensure Phoenix's residences are safe, cozy, and dignified.



Additionally, Home Depot's Orange Door Project campaigns raise funds and awareness surrounding youth homelessness in the community. This past year, the Kijipuktuk/Halifax store ran the Orange Door campaign twice with Phoenix as their recipient. The store placed as one of the top three fundraisers out of all Home Depot locations nationwide. Thank you to the Kijipuktuk/Halifax Home Depot and The Foundation for continuing to support youth in accessing crisis supports, short-term housing, and independent living.

Love in all Forms, Peace by Chocolate

The Hadhad family's beloved local chocolate business, Peace by Chocolate, continued to sweetly celebrate “love in all forms” this past Pride Month with their special line of Pride-themed chocolate bars. Through the summer, the Pride chocolate bars raised over \$4 thousand in support of Phoenix and youth. Phoenix is inspired by the Hadhad family's story and their remarkable Peace by Chocolate enterprise. We're thankful for the opportunity to combine our passions in the interest of supporting youth, their families, and communities.



Honouring Steve Murphy, Halifax ReTales

When COVID-19 closed local businesses and organizations, Halifax ReTales and Power Promotional Concepts launched Local Love. The online shop carries an array of products featuring Maritime cultural touchstones and donates all proceeds to local non-profits.

Phoenix was delighted to be included in the store's recognition of CTV Atlantic's news anchor Steve Murphy. To congratulate Murphy's retirement and his own charitable giving, Halifax ReTales sold exclusive mugs featuring Murphy, raising \$3 thousand in support of Phoenix. It brings a special feeling of hope to see communities support local businesses and local gems returning that love back to their neighbours.



Mug design by local artist Matt Reid.

Hit the Deck, Giant Bicycle Halifax

After gathering restrictions set Giant Bicycle Halifax's fundraiser off course in March 2021, cyclists were back on track for an equally heart-pumping virtual reality edition of Hit the Deck for 2022. On March 5, participants set up their bikes and did a stationary cycle through a virtual course for five straight hours, raising funds for Phoenix Youth Programs. Riders gathered pledges and raised a total of \$1,825. We're excited to see the return of this energetic community event and are deeply appreciative for all levels of participation from cyclists.



Leaving a Legacy of Support and Change

Our actions can create lasting, positive impacts on the people around us. Setting up a planned gift can help leave a legacy for loved ones and for entire communities. For Laura, her connection with Phoenix inspired her to organize a planned gift in her name. This relationship between Laura and Phoenix began seven years ago, but Laura's belief in the importance of supporting youth and their families began long before.

How did you first learn about Phoenix?

In the late 80s, I was working in Halifax as a waitress and the restaurant had a "bottomless coffee cup" policy that offered youth a place to come sit and have coffee. From these youth I became aware of an organization called Phoenix House. I moved away to earn my graduate degree, but when I returned to Halifax, I was reminded of Phoenix, now called Phoenix Youth Programs, and began supporting them.

Why did Phoenix's mission resonate with you?

I grew up in a single parent home with my mom and older brother in the early '60s. My mom struggled to find work that could support our family while also affording safe child care. With only a grade 10 education, her options were few and she ended up receiving Income Assistance.

My mom wanted to go back to school and become a nurse but was denied support from Income Assistance. She was told that she would lose her income if she enrolled in school. So, our family had first-hand experience being caught in the system.

When I was a teenager, our family dynamic changed. My brother graduated from high school and was working full time while I was waitressing part time and attending school. Things were difficult and I thought about dropping out, but my brother insisted, "You need to finish. You're going to thank me for this someday." He was right. If it wasn't for him, who could pay the rent and ensure we had a place to live, I wouldn't have been able to stay in school and my life would have been drastically different.

Why did you choose to include Phoenix in your will?

My financial advisor and I were working on my retirement and estate plan, and he asked, "Think about, beyond your family and close friends, is there anything else you want to do?"

He invited me to a seminar where they talked about tax benefits of charitable gifts in estates. I care about Phoenix, but it hadn't really dawned on me what I could and should do until I was at the seminar.

I realized you don't have to have significant wealth to make a planned gift. My financial advisor was extremely helpful in understanding what my needs will be and what I wanted to do. Together, we created a plan.

I had first thought about directing the gift to something specific, but then it struck me that, no, it's about what Phoenix is doing by covering the basic needs of youth to help them get onto a solid life path. If housing, basic needs, and health care are taken care of, that gives them the room so they can forge their own paths. This is the thing I care about.

What is your hope with this gift?

To know the impact that will happen as a result. It's about lives and successful living. When I think about the soundtrack of my life, the theme song would be "I Get By With A Little Help From My Friends." Sometimes when the going gets tough, help and support come from really unexpected places.

In a perfect world, Phoenix wouldn't be needed, but we don't live in a perfect world. I'm glad Phoenix is here.



A total of 653 youth across multiple programs were served

131	Phoenix Youth Shelter
12	Phoenix House
10	Phoenix Homes for Independence
238	Phoenix Centre for Youth
39	Youth Outreach Program
109	Phoenix Learning & Employment Centre
62	Phoenix Youth & Community Centre
52	Phoenix Youth & Family Therapy

*Capacity rates for this reporting period were significantly lowered as a result of Public Health and Phoenix protocols in place for COVID-19.

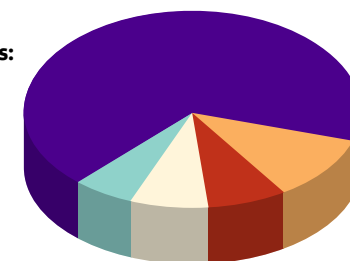
Your Support Makes a Difference

Total number of donors:

1,744

Total number of gifts:

3,955



67%	Major Gifts, Planned Giving & Stewardship
11%	Grants & Proposals
8%	Community Engagement
8%	Phoenix Signature Events
6%	Annual Giving

"I am really grateful for the opportunity to be at Phoenix Homes for Independence. It has a great impact in my life and helped me get back on track!"

"The Youth Outreach Program staff's kindness and patience makes me feel safe and less alone or lost. The program has given me a sense of self and the ability to feel confident in connecting with others."

"Just knowing I have someone in my corner helps. I matter with Phoenix and so does my mental health."

"I have been able to stand on my own as in help myself grow, learn, and feel better both emotionally and mentally."

Opening Doors and Possibilities

It is without hesitation that I offer my thanks to Phoenix’s dedicated community of supporters. You have continued to stand with us and place trust in Phoenix’s adaptability and perseverance. Each day that Phoenix staff work with and support youth is made possible by the community support that you offer and that we are honoured to receive.

The past year continued to be marked by the complexities of the global pandemic and the unprecedented need for safe, affordable, and dignified housing. As we pressed forward to support youth and address these barriers, your belief in Phoenix and our mandate never wavered. It is because of this support that we’ve been able to strengthen existing services and develop new programs to grow our capacity to help youth, their families, and communities for generations to come.

Phoenix’s work could truly not be done without all of you—our friends, donors, volunteers, community partners, and supporters. Thank you for your commitment and generosity, and for always believing in the power of youth and community.

We continue to look forward to the possibilities and opportunities we create together.

Deanne Macleod (she/her)
Chair
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*Refers to monthly donors with cumulative gifts over \$100

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