



2024-2025  
annual  
REPORT

When there's no place  
that's home, there's

Aunt Leah's

## MISSION & VISION

Aunt Leah's helps prevent youth from foster care from becoming homeless and vulnerable young mothers from losing custody of their children. To support them on their journey to self sufficiency, we provide housing, lifeskills, education and employment services.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Board Chair** Megan Halprin | **Vice Chair** Samantha Tong | **Treasurer** Rick Schneider | **Secretary** Rebecca Frederick | Lucie Fournet | Dr. Joy Walcott-Francis | Elizabeth Miller | Soraya Parwani | Monica Bohm

## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Aunt Leah's acknowledges, respects and celebrates the Coast Salish Nations on whose territories we are fortunate to provide service. Specifically, the unceded, occupied, ancestral and traditional lands of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), Səlilwətał / Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), Stó:lō, and Qayqayt Nations.

We also recognize the Métis Nation of British Columbia, including the Charter Métis Communities connected to the areas in which Aunt Leah's operates, and honour the enduring presence, culture, and contributions of Métis people in this region.





**SARAH STEWART | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

### **Dear Friends,**

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with gratitude for the resilience, compassion, and unwavering support that define Aunt Leah's community. Thank you. The 2024/2025 year was one of both challenge and deep transformation. Across all our programs we witnessed the power of care and connection to change lives.

**Your gift improved the lives of 403 people.**

At the heart of Aunt Leah's are the young people and families we walk alongside: former youth in care and vulnerable moms, forging new paths with incredible strength. We know that youth from care are nineteen times more likely to experience homelessness than youth in the general population.

Their stories of perseverance in the face of systemic barriers remind us daily why our mission matters. They also remind us that none of this would be possible without you: our donors, volunteers, staff, and partners, who believe in a world where every young person has a safe place to call home and the support they need to thrive.

One of the most exciting developments this year has been the continued growth of our partnership with **Aunt Leah's Properties**. Together, we're working to increase the supply of **affordable, stable housing** for our participants who face some of the highest barriers to safe and secure housing. While Properties concentrates on building the 90-unit Marine Way affordable housing project we are developing service options that will prepare us to welcome residents in fall 2027.



**MEGAN HALPRIN | BOARD CHAIR**

“What a difference a year makes. Thanks to the dedication and leadership of Sarah, the management team, and staff, Aunt Leah’s has made a strong recovery and is on course to grow our impact. The board provided valuable support and guidance during this transitional year. Together, we completed a review and update of our Three-Year Strategic Plan—reaffirming our commitment to improving the lives of those we serve. We look forward to sharing our progress with you next year. Thank you for your support.”

This year, our She Thrives campaign demonstrated just how powerful collective giving can be. Thanks to your generosity, we expanded wraparound supports for young women at risk of losing their children to government care. The newly completed Laneway House on our Boundary Road property provides two more safe, secure homes and an opportunity to build stable, empowered futures.

We work to support transformation in the lives of young people, and we know it’s just as important to embrace it within our organization. After a challenging financial reality in 2023/24 we successfully streamlined our infrastructure while improving systems efficiency. The resulting fiscal position this year puts us in a place of strength as we expand and refine our housing supports. While we continue to face challenges in hiring service delivery staff, we are confident that improvements to our human resources systems and staff training practices will enhance our ability to meet program needs.

We renewed our investment in the Aunt Leah’s Resource Centre, reaffirming its role as a safe, welcoming, and dependable hub for connection, stability, and support.

Our meal, grocery, and cooking programs run weekly. Education, employment navigation, and skills coaching are always available.

Community service providers also use the space, making access to services, like mental health counselling, easier for youth. The centre is a place where youth can find what they need, when they need it.

We made intentional, mission-driven choices that were difficult but necessary. The decision to close our **Thrift Store and Donation Centre** was not made lightly. These operations played a significant role in our community for many years, and we are deeply grateful to every staff member, volunteer, and donor who contributed to their success. While change can be challenging, this transition allows us to focus more directly on our core mission and ensure our resources are aligned with the greatest needs of those we serve.

We also deepened our focus on equity and inclusion, ensuring our programs are culturally safe and responsive to the diverse identities of those we serve, our staff and volunteers. This is ongoing work, and we remain committed to learning, unlearning, and listening as we grow.

Looking ahead, we are inspired by what's possible. With your continued support, we will keep showing up, speaking out, and standing with young people as



they navigate their journeys. Thank you for being part of this movement of care and transformation. With gratitude,

Sarah and Megan



# HOUSING

Stable secure housing forms the basis of the journey to adulthood and self-sufficiency for all of us.

Children in government care range in age from babies to teens under 19 years old. Some children come into foster care at the request of their parents who need temporary help to care for them.



Many young people enter government care because of family breakdown, or unsafe living conditions. Their removal is often the result of intergenerational trauma and poverty. They are placed in foster care by court order for their safety and protection.

However, the foster care system itself can be disruptive and unstable. Many youth experience the trauma of multiple placements — often moving through an average of four different foster homes — which can interrupt their schooling, relationships, and sense of belonging. By the time they leave care, many do so without consistent supports to guide their transition into adulthood and independence.

Aunt Leah's steps in to provide the care, connection, and practical support that young people need to thrive.

## HOUSING IS THE FIRST STEP

Aunt Leah's established Aunt Leah's Foundation in 2013 in response to the growing need for affordable housing for youth from care. Operating now as Aunt Leah's Properties, this organization owns and manages properties and buys and builds housing.



The two organizations hold a strategic leasing arrangement that enables Aunt Leah's to offer comprehensive programs and support services in the properties.

### IN 2024/2025

**49** youth, moms and kids lived in Aunt Leah's housing and were provided with wrap around support. An additional **11** people lived in affordable housing owned and managed by Aunt Leah's Properties.

**114** participants benefited from Aunt Leah's housing services – they were helped by our staff to find and maintain a place to live. **74** received rent subsidies, thanks to BC Housing and Reaching Home Canada. The total amount of funds awarded was **\$324,812**. The average rent subsidy is **\$759**.

All in all, we helped and housed **136 people** who otherwise risked homelessness.

**Lale Houses** **11** youth leaving care lived in **2** supportive shared accommodation homes.

**Thresholds** **12** moms and **14** children lived in **3** homes, **2** semi-independent suites and a laneway house. No moms lost custody of their children. **3** moms moved out into the community successfully.

**Support Link** **12** young people under age 19 in government care were provided with tenancy, lifeskills, system, education/employment navigation coaching to live independently.



## AUNT LEAH'S PROPERTIES

- Completed construction of a **2 family laneway house** behind our home in Burnaby. 2 families moved in August 2025.
- Purchased a **3** story apartment building with **41** suites with funding from the BC Rental Protection Fund. This building provides safe, affordable housing for existing tenants and Aunt Leah's program participants as space becomes available.
- Began construction plans for a **90 unit multi-residential rental complex** in New Westminster with funding from BC Housing's Community Housing Fund and Vancity's Affordable Housing program. Rents will allow for deep subsidy, rent geared to income and below market options for studio, one, two and three bedroom units.
- Aunt Leah's Properties continues to own and operate the Telford Block an **11** unit affordable housing apartment building in New Westminster.



## DYLAN

When we offered participants an opportunity to share their experiences, Dylan was the first to step forward, eager to give back to Aunt Leah's and support others facing similar challenges.

Dylan and his brother were taken into care when he was very young. He did not know his parents and lived with his aunt, within a government care agreement. When he aged out, he was fortunate that his social worker referred him to Lale House. He has been with us for 2 years.

Dylan feels that he belongs at Aunt Leah's. He has benefited most from mental health counselling through our partnership with Dan's Legacy, a local counselling organization. He has made friends, finished high school with good grades, learned how to look after himself and volunteered in Aunt Leah's kitchen lunch program. Right now, he is looking for a part-time job. Because his home is affordable at Lale House, he has the security to look for work and pursue learning opportunities.



**"Aunt Leah's has taught me how to be a friend to myself." — Dylan**

If Dylan could make things better for other foster youth, he would start a mentorship program for young men. He doesn't have a father and searches for someone to emulate and learn from his experience. He is grateful for Zach, a Lale House staff member who is always there for him.

# EDUCATION

Learning for a future of  
promise and self-reliance.

Life in foster care is often unstable. Moves from family to family are frequent, schooling is disrupted and the will and ability to learn undermined. While research is sparse, a 2016 report by Gavin Fisher found that less than 50 per cent of youth leaving foster care in B.C. graduate high school by their 19th birthday.

When young people come to Aunt Leah's with all kinds of hopes and dreams, your support helps build their futures. Some want to finish high school, get some training and start a job as soon as possible. Others look to realize a passion or create a career. Whatever they see for themselves, Aunt Leah's helps with planning, information, coaching to navigate the education system and financial assistance that will help them on their way.

**94** participants engaged in education activities.

**74** developed an education/employment plan.

**63%** graduated from high school.

**12%** 13 students completed 21 post secondary programs.

**90%** of Thresholds moms participated in at least one education program.

While the BC government tuition fee waivers end at age 27, Aunt Leah's offers coaching and bursaries for those in reach of their learning goals beyond that age.

## **MML FUND**

2024-2025 marked the inception of the MML Fund created by the family of Monika Langer. Dr. Langer was Associate Professor Emerita (Philosophy) at University of Victoria. The Fund was created to honour her work as an educator and community leader.

Bursaries from the fund are available to women served by Aunt Leah's who are enrolled in higher education programs (women who have experienced the foster care system or have been at risk of losing their children).

The fund specifically supports women who are embarking on learning that will lead to better-paid careers in traditional and non-traditional areas

such as Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math, Information Technology or Trades Certification.

Bursary funds are available to support recipients with all matters related to continuing education and training, including tuition and books, housing, food, daycare, or other expenses that support the attainment of a well-paying career.

This first year of the fund's 3 year term, 7 women and non-binary youth participated in the program and were awarded a total of \$5,592.38, for an average bursary amount of \$799. Their career choices included Emergency Medical Responder Certification, Neuroscience, Engineering, Social Work and Dental Hygiene. With \$30,000 available annually to award, more than 15 young people have been identified as potential recipients in the year ahead. The MML Fund will undoubtedly create avenues for women in our programs to build independent, sustainable futures for themselves and their families.

**"Thanks to Aunt Leah's education program and the MML Fund I've been able to successfully complete my Primary Care Paramedic Program at the Justice Institute of British Columbia and pass my licensing exams. Now, I can continue to support my community with my employment with BC Ambulance and provide top notch care to all the patients who may need assistance." — Bailey Patron**

# EMPLOYMENT

This year, our programs have evolved to meet changing participant needs. We aim to remove systemic barriers, build confidence and pathways toward employment and financial stability.



**Lifeskills learning is fundamental to gaining employment.** Our approach ensures that participants receive the level of job readiness training that meets their needs. Often learning personal and practical self-management skills are the first step. Offered at our Resource Centre, one on one coaching and workshops in budgeting, time management, conflict resolution, and communication are an initial part of each participant's journey. Others may be ready for career exploration, job search and digital literacy support. Our new Fresh Air Fridays drop-in program encourages youth to grow their commitment to time management, active engagement in activities, and interpersonal skills that will help prepare them for entering the job market.

**35** Total Participants in Employment Services (including drop in)

**12** Job Placements (Employment Program)

**4** Participants maintained a job for 3 months.

As we look ahead to 2025/2026, we'll continue to offer opportunities to deepen each individual's learning journey and increase their stability and independence.

# RESOURCE CENTRE

**“The small things have meant the most. When I was sick with COVID and isolated, staff brought me food and helped with my tests. They are there to help me work through problems and things that come up in everyday life.” —Miranda**

Aunt Leah's Resource Centre in New Westminster offers a welcoming space where our participants can find assistance to meet their basic needs – food, clothing and shelter and support from our staff to address more complex challenges and longer term goals.

Individuals Served: **250**



Aunt Leah's Resource Centre is a social purpose community asset made possible by a significantly subsidized lease from the owner, **Central City Foundation**.

The Wednesday meal and grocery program has become an important failsafe for many when their financial resources are stretched. Youth gather to pick up essentials and reconnect with friends and staff. In addition an emergency food cupboard (and refrigerator) offers staples on an as needed basis.

- **938** visits
- Number of meals: **2561**
- Number of bags of groceries: **1910**

Participants can set up meetings with their worker to address their housing, education and employment plans or find help with day to day challenges.

Special services and drop-in programs run on an ongoing basis.



**Mental Health counselling** is offered on-site by our partner Dan's Legacy. Last year **39** youth participated in **460** sessions. **65%** of our participants reported living with mental health issues.

**20** people took advantage of monthly **sharing circles** which create an opportunity to build relationships and gain perspective on personal issues.

**Provincial Income Assistance** navigation is made accessible by our partnership with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction to provide a community liaison worker. **62** people sought help **143** times on **25** Wednesdays.

Personal hygiene supplies, washrooms, showers, computer, internet, and telephone as well as a space to rest are all available on a drop in basis.

## **PERSISTENT BARRIERS TO MENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING STABILITY**

The context in which Aunt Leah's provides services

continues to be challenging. Our participants face complex and interrelated barriers to stability, including mental health challenges, substance use, housing insecurity, income instability, and chronic health issues. Access to formal mental health and addictions support is often limited, delayed, or cut, leaving frontline staff at Aunt Leah's to fill the gap to find scarce resources within the context of trauma and chronic stress. **Two challenges most significantly impact participants' ability to stabilize:**

- **The abrupt aging-out process at 19** leads to sudden disconnection from trusted workers and systems. Young people are often left navigating new systems alone just as their care status ends.
- **The lack of safe, affordable, and youth-appropriate housing:** Many youth are discharged into housing that is unstable, unsafe, or unaffordable, further compounding mental health and substance use challenges and increasing vulnerability to exploitation or survival-based behaviors.

Aunt Leah's continues to advocate for more integrated support systems and a comprehensive and adequately resourced government strategy for housing youth leaving care.

# VOLUNTEERS AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Once again our annual Christmas Tree sales succeeded in engaging the community in celebrating the season. 300 volunteers turned out to set up our lots, unload trees and make sales of 4,704 trees to our loyal customers. We were fortunate to realize a profit of \$80,410 which was directed toward our essential programs and services. Special thanks to the congregations of St. Stephens United in Vancouver, All Saints Anglican in Burnaby and Eagle Ridge United in Coquitlam for providing their premises free of charge.



## THRIFT STORE CLOSURE AND TRANSITION

In early 2025, we made the difficult decision to close Aunt Leah's Thrift Store and Donation Centre. While the store offered valuable training opportunities for youth in past years, the changing retail landscape and loss of government funding led us to refocus our efforts on more flexible and scalable employment pathways. The transition has allowed us to reallocate resources toward individualized employment support at the Resource Centre.

Volunteers at Aunt Leah's sell trees at Christmas lots, prepare meals, support students with their academic goals, helped at the Thrift store, offer professional expertise, serve on our board of directors, and advise behind the scenes. Thank you!

**We look forward to offering trees to the community again in 2025.**

# YOUTH SUCCESSSES



Taryn receiving the Rona Award for her discipline and drive in pursuing her goals

Ruby receiving the Leah Award for her empathy, warmth and courage as she cares for her daughter and those around her



# 403

## YOUTH, MOMS and babies SERVED





Dylan receiving the Rona Award for his inspiring strength and positivity

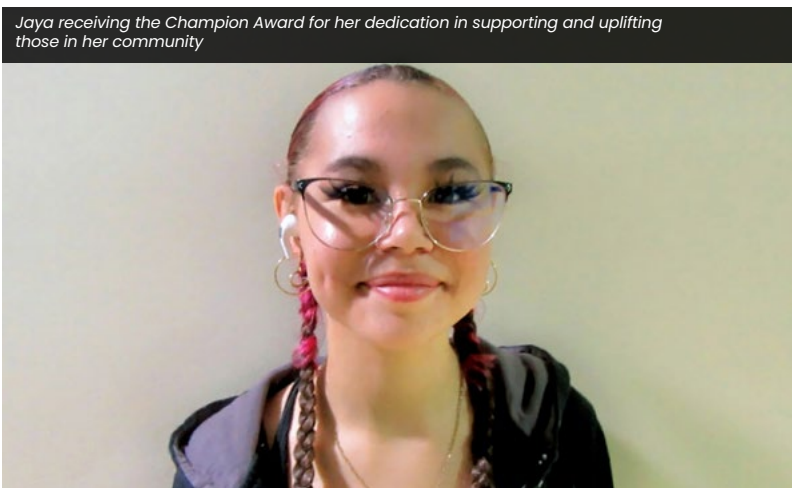


Jordan receiving the Leadership Award for his resilience and leadership in guiding others



# 136

## YOUTH, MOMS & CHILDREN HOUSED



Jaya receiving the Champion Award for her dedication in supporting and uplifting those in her community

## YOUR GIFT IN ACTION

Your commitment to our work makes a difference in a young person's life. Each donation demonstrates your understanding of the deep injustice of the foster care system and the need to take action to make meaningful change.

By the end of the 2024/2025 fiscal year 1,390 donors gave \$2,874,738 to maintain our services. The "She Thrives" Campaign donors raised \$358,000 to support the Thresholds program. As you know our homes for mothers and their children and youth leaving care are funded, aside from rents paid, completely by individuals, charitable organizations and businesses. Thank you.



The housing subsidies and housing services that we provide to our participants would not be possible without the generous support of our federal Reaching Home and provincial government BC Housing and Ministry of Children and Families partners. Our services and site in Downtown Vancouver are supported by the City of Vancouver.

Whether you give once a year, monthly or plan for a future gift, your contribution is vital to our ability to prevent homelessness, poverty and despair. Each participant is seen and supported, skills learned, plans made, steps taken and futures made real.

“Words can’t describe how proud we are of the work Aunt Leah’s does. I’m so glad we were able to offer some help.”

I continue to be emotional about what these young people endure, and yet, thrive.”

— Anne Nurse-Richardson, donor

As always we recognize and deeply appreciate the long time and future commitment of our Leah’s Legacy donors. Our thanks to Gale Stewart, Aunt Leah’s founder, who inspires this visionary group.



# OUR SUPPORTERS

## GOVERNMENT FUNDERS & PARTNERS



Reaching Home



Ministry of Children and Family Development

Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills

BC Housing

BC Community Gaming



Vancouver Coastal Health Authority

City of Vancouver

City of New Westminster

## LEAH'S LEGACY DONORS

Barbara Gauthier

Bruce Avery

Carol Hames

Carol Wyatt

Debra Carswell

Don & Judi Curtiss

Dr. Cheryl Seaman

Gale & Paul Stewart

Gillies Malnarich

Hugh & Diana Alley

Janice Brown

Lois Walker

Maria Pichichero

Megan Halprin

Nancy & Gord Adams

Shawna Faber & Berni James

Sheila Kelton

## BUSINESSES & ORGANIZATIONS (\$1000+)

Bennett Jones LLP

Bocci

Buchanan Programme & Peter Haldenby

Chubb Insurance Company of Canada

DP World

Edge Acoustics

Elks Club of New Westminster

Insurance Institute Canada

Kerrisdale Cameras

Kinsmen Club of Langley

Mott Electric

Mount Pleasant War Memorial

Community Cooperative Association

Next Level Games

Perception Ventures

Royal Canadian Legion - Branch 2

Sammy Chan Cardiology Inc.

Seaforth Elementary School

Tai Beauty Group

Vancouver Rotary Club Foundation

Yardi Canada Ltd.

TD Bank Group

Verbatim Words West Ltd.

Whitehorse Liquidity Partners Inc.

WorkSafe BC Helping Hands

Yardi Canada Ltd.

## FOUNDATIONS & CHARITIES

6 Anonymous Foundations

Ames Family Foundation

Anako Foundation

Averbach Family Foundation

Bright Funds

Byram Family Foundation

Cause We Care Foundation

Centraide of Greater Montreal

Central City Foundation

Chantler-Langer Foundation

Dr. Ann Worth Charitable Foundation

Eagle Rock Charitable Fund

Face the World Foundation

Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks

Good Shepherd Lutheran

Church of Coquitlam

Greater Vancouver REALTORS

Idea Family Foundation

Intracorp Canadian Foundation

John Hardie Mitchell Family Foundation

Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation

Louis Family Foundation

Mathisen Family Private Foundation

Ocean Park Foundation

Osprey Tree Foundation

All donor names can be found at [auntleahs.org/impact/reports](https://auntleahs.org/impact/reports)

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Central City Foundation  
Chantler-Langer Foundation  
Dr. Ann Worth Charitable Foundation  
Eagle Rock Charitable Fund  
Face the World Foundation  
Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks  
Good Shepherd Lutheran Church of Coquitlam  
Greater Vancouver REALTORS  
Idea Family Foundation  
Intracorp Canadian Foundation  
John Hardie Mitchell Family Foundation  
Lotte & John Hecht Memorial Foundation  
Louis Family Foundation  
Mathisen Family Private Foundation  
Ocean Park Foundation  
Osprey Tree Foundation  
Pareto Foundation

## FOUNDATIONS & CHARITIES

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RBC Foundation  
Seedlings Foundation  
St. Mary's Kerrisdale Anglican Church  
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The Ember Fund  
The Fyfe Foundation  
The Home Depot Canada Foundation  
The Marty Cutler Foundation  
The Walsh Foundation  
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Wolrige Foundation  
WorkSafe BC Helping Hands  
Young Foundation  
ZLC Foundation

## FOUNDATIONS & CHARITIES

**HELD AT BENEFACTION FOUNDATION**  
Heather House Fund  
The Barker Family Foundation  
The Gordon Family Fund

**HELD AT GIFT FUNDS CANADA**  
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The Gauthier Family Charitable Fund

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**HELD AT VANCOUVER FOUNDATION**  
Dragon Fire Fund  
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Mirhady Family Fund  
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Winifred Searle Memorial Fund for Aunt Leah's

**HELD AT VICTORIA FOUNDATION**  
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Gage Foundation Fund

**HELD AT THE WINNIPEG FOUNDATION**  
Moffat Family Fund

In addition to donors listed below, we gratefully acknowledge donors who contributed through Charitable Impact Foundation, Benevity and CanadaHelps, and those who chose to remain Anonymous.

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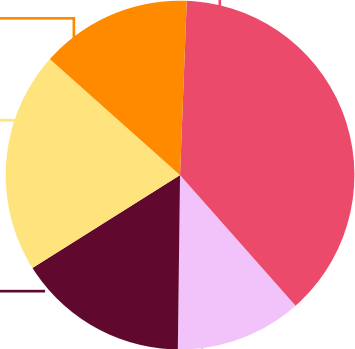
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Tristan Kingcott
Trudy Reid
Verlon Otto
Walter Meyer Zu Erpen
Wendy Amy
Wes Schreiber
William Smith

# FINANCIALS

## Revenue

\$6,249,674 | 100%

FOUNDATIONS AND CHARITIES		
Subtotal	1,013,760	16%
INDIVIDUALS		
Subtotal	1,482,642	24%
COMMUNITY, BUSINESSES AND CORPORATIONS		
Subtotal	145,889	2%
SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND OTHERS		
Subtotal	847,519	14%



GOVERNMENT FUNDING		
Ministry of Children and Families	1,094,470	
Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy	430,807	
Ministry of Advance Education, Skills and Training	227,096	
BC Housing	836,856	
BC Gaming Income	70,135	
Municipal	78,200	
Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	22,300	
Subtotal	2,759,864	44%

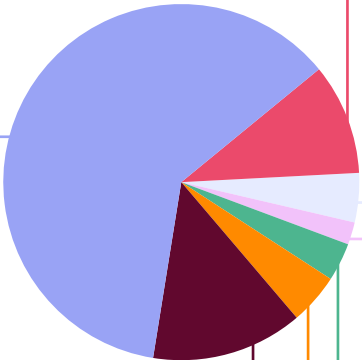
# FINANCIALS

## Expenses

\$ 5,843,547 | 100%

HOUSING		
Support Link	1,094,865	
Link Housing Services	209,518	
Reaching Home Services	430,988	
BC Housing Services	861,294	
Lale Houses	209,988	
Thresholds	786,260	
Health Authority	6,208	
Subtotal	3,599,121	62%

SOCIAL ENTERPRISES		
Wages and Benefits	203,382	
Administration and Overhead	78,184	
Operating Expenses	521,822	
Subtotal	803,388	14%



FUNDRAISING		
Wages and Benefits	393,033	
Administration and overhead	170,713	
Operating expenses	24,483	
Subtotal	588,229	10%

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION		
Subtotal	267,379	5%

RESOURCE CENTRE		
Subtotal	112,724	2%

EMPLOYMENT		
Subtotal	208,554	4%

EDUCATION		
Subtotal	264,152	5%



**Aunt Leah's Youth Hub &  
Main Office**

816 Twentieth Street  
New Westminster, BC  
Canada, V3M 4W6  
604 525 1204

**Aunt Leah's Vancouver  
Office**

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Vancouver, BC  
Canada, V6B 0R1  
604 559 9982

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