



PEOPLE OF CoolAid

WINTER 2022

You're Helping Seniors Like Rod Rebuild Their Lives

During these difficult times, more seniors than ever are living in poverty and homelessness. Your generous support helps vulnerable seniors find safe housing, nourishing food, medical care, and the support they need to turn their lives around.

Rod's story is one of loss, but also one of hope.

For nearly 47 years, he worked to build a life for his family. He excelled at his strenuous job as a bricklayer, and even started his own company.

But for many years, he was also challenged by substance use—challenges that eventually led to bigger issues like declining health, separation from his family, and eventually homelessness. It was not the life he had imagined or worked for.

Rod, who is “damn near 70 years old,” tried to survive on the streets while growing sicker by the day. He had hit rock bottom when he arrived at the doors of Rock Bay Landing Shelter. But he found the resolve to get help by holding on to the hope that he could maintain a connection with his family if he turned his life around.

Rod was at Rock Bay for about six months—a difficult time that he also describes as “the best thing that ever happened to me.”

Finding Hope and Healing

Rod didn't just find hot meals and a safe place to sleep when he landed at Cool Aid. He found a community that recognized his potential and walked with him on every step of his journey.

The Cool Aid team helped Rod sign up for the disability benefits he was entitled to, the first step to getting back on his feet. They helped him get on the list for affordable housing.

At Cool Aid's Community Health Centre, he received care for a myriad of health issues, including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and heart



problems. He got life-changing treatment for Hepatitis C and now describes himself as cured of the disease—something he did not think was possible.

“Everyone at the Health Clinic is great. They know your name and make you feel at home,” Rod says.

Getting His Life Back With Your Help

When Rod looks back at his life before Cool Aid, it looks pretty different from where he is now.

Today, he has an apartment of his own at



You Demonstrate the True Meaning of Love in Our Community

It's the month of love! But here at Cool Aid, we know that love can't be confined to a single month of the year.

Because each and every day, from January to December, caring people like you demonstrate the true meaning of love to your vulnerable neighbours.

You cared for so many people in Victoria during another tremendously difficult year—and your support means the absolute world to us.

You gave a safe home to someone who had been sleeping on the streets in the dead of winter. You gave warm socks and boots to keep people healthy and comfortable. You gave a woman struggling with substance use access to a team of doctors, nurses, and counsellors through the mobile clinic. You gave seniors struggling with poverty a home, hot meals, and a close-knit community.

During a once-in-a-lifetime crisis, you made sure that we could continue to be there for every neighbour who turned to us, no matter what challenges the pandemic threw our way. You helped us take the fight against COVID-19 out into the community through our mobile vaccine clinics.

You made the holiday season special for neighbours in need, raising an incredible \$71,400 for grocery gift cards so that every person who turned to us could have nourishing food on their table during the festive season.



As we look forward to those first bright days of spring after a long winter, I'm optimistic about what we'll accomplish together in the coming months. There's lots of good news on the horizon, like the incredible 286 new affordable and supportive housing units we have under development at Crosstown, Gorge Road, and Balmoral.

Please know that you're making life-changing programs possible, helping neighbours overcome homelessness and poverty in our community each and every day.

We couldn't do this important work without you by our side.

With my heartfelt gratitude,

Kathy Stinson
Chief Executive Officer

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Cool Aid's Olympic Vista location, where 36 residents benefit from safe, supportive housing—including daily meals, community activities, and vital health care.

Rod is grateful for the opportunity that opened up in front of him the day he walked through Cool Aid's doors. He's healthier and happier than he's been

in years. He spends almost every day with his son and his son's family, and he has created a lasting connection with his three granddaughters.

Your support makes stories like Rod's possible. Thank you for helping vulnerable seniors find a place to live, nourishing food, life-saving health care, and a supportive community. ■

Dr. Kate Elliott: Championing Indigenous Health in Victoria

In partnership with Cool Aid and the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, Dr. Kate Elliott is embarking on a mission that she has long held in her heart: bringing equitable, Indigenous-led health care to Indigenous people in Victoria.

Growing up as a member of the Métis Nation, Kate Elliott knew she wanted to help make things better for Indigenous people in her community. With that goal in her heart, she began her career as a long-term care aide, only to come face-to-face with a health care system that wasn't meeting the needs of its Indigenous patients.

Kate was resolved to change things for the better, returning to school to earn her medical degree in 2019.

Dr. Elliott spent her two-year residency caring for Indigenous patients at the Cool Aid Community Health Centre. **"I have been stunned by her energy and community service," says Dr. Frank Nezil, Dr. Elliott's residency supervisor. "She has exceptional empathy and compassion for her patients."**

She builds a close relationship with each of her patients, taking the time to understand their history and their stories. She is committed to delivering care that addresses the root causes of their health

issues, from cultural and language barriers to generational trauma.

"She helps people reach through their trauma with a gentle touch," her colleague Dr. Nezil says.

Dr. Elliott is also a passionate advocate for long-term change to the health care system. She served as co-chair of the *In Plain Sight* Task Force, shining a light on Indigenous racism in the BC health care system and tabling 24 recommendations to overcome it.

In October 2021, Dr. Elliott started a new chapter of her medical career in partnership with Cool Aid. Bringing together local Indigenous communities, the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, health care professionals, and other partners, she is working to deliver health care and outreach that is designed for Indigenous patients and rooted in Indigenous values, principles, and relationships.

"Our people cannot wait for the health system to change. There is an imperative to provide culturally appropriate care today."

People need care now. This is an amazing opportunity to fill that need.

Your Generosity at Work:



74,215
medical visits



645
people housed



4,703
grocery gift cards
to feed hungry
neighbours



300,000
meals served

YOU Inspire Us

Thank You Kia! You Warmed Feet—and Hearts at Cool Aid!



Kia Victoria has stepped up once again to keep our most vulnerable neighbours warm and comfortable during the cold, wet winter. By generously partnering with Cool Aid, longtime volunteer, Michael Bloomfield and Congregation Emmanu-El, and matching gifts up to \$5,000, Kia helped us buy an incredible 10,000 new pairs of socks for neighbours experiencing poverty and homelessness!

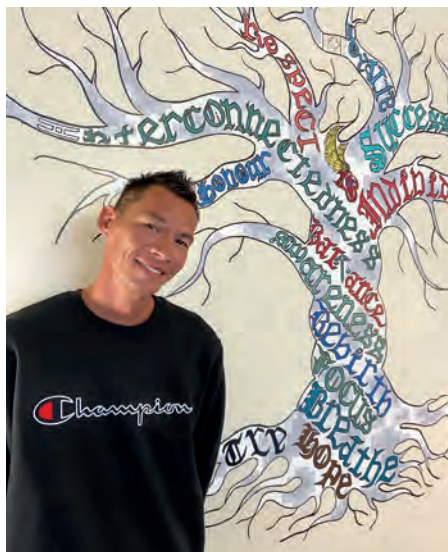
These socks won't just save people from the misery of cold, wet feet over the long winter months. Foot health is a chronic concern for those on the streets. Worn and damaged shoes, long hours spent walking, harsh weather, and chronic conditions like diabetes can lead to a range of foot problems, from blisters to infections to frostbite. A pair of warm, new socks can protect someone's feet and keep them healthy and safe.

Kia encouraged its customers to join the challenge, and even sold delicious cookies to raise funds for the cause. Thank you, Kia, for your commitment to helping our neighbours in need.

“What really resonated was that for as little as \$1, you could make a difference to someone living on the streets in Victoria.”

— Bethan Ostermann,
Kia Victoria

Sharing the Love in Greater Victoria



Follow us to see how you're changing lives in Victoria!

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