



PEOPLE OF

# CoolAid

FALL 2024

## Residents are moving into their new Crosstown homes— *with your support*

**“I’ll be part of a community.”**

“If you don’t have a real home, you can’t get yourself on track again.”

That’s Brett, who lives at the Tally Ho, a Cool Aid supportive housing site. He’s talking about getting ready to move into his apartment in our new Crosstown development that will offer both affordable and supportive units.

“I’ve been at the Tally Ho for over six years,” Brett says. “It’s been a long journey and I can’t wait to make a fresh start.”

Brett used to work in construction. “I got in too deep, putting in 54 hours a week. My boss took advantage of me. He didn’t pay any overtime. Then, I had serious problems with my back and my mental health issues only got worse.”

Brett lost his apartment and ended up sleeping in his truck. He stayed at Cool Aid’s Rock Bay Landing Shelter before coming to Tally Ho.

He says, “I get a lot of help at Tally Ho, like an evening meal. The mobile clinic comes by, so I can see a doctor and get medication for my back. The staff is on hand to help with government documents and they



helped me apply for disability assistance. Plus, I can talk to them—I’ve only started dealing with my mental health issues in the last couple of years.”

Brett is looking forward to cooking in his own kitchen in his Crosstown home and enjoying

common areas with his fellow residents.

He says, “I’ll be part of a community, not someone stigmatized for living in a motel. It’s a great feeling knowing I’ll never have to worry about my rent going up and being



## Looking forward with optimism—thanks to you



It's just over a year since I started at Cool Aid, and what a year it has been!

Meeting as many of our staff and clients as possible, touring our sites, connecting with community partners, and getting to know this complex organization has been very gratifying but not without its

challenges.

Alongside the incredible work we do on your behalf to provide housing, health, and connection, we've navigated significant challenges, including indoor air quality, the ongoing toxic drug crisis, and a myriad of funding issues.

With your help, we're delivering innovative and forward-thinking solutions to homelessness. Among them is Crosstown, a groundbreaking project that integrates housing, health, wellness, and opportunities. As you read this, 54 people in supportive housing are looking forward to celebrating their first holiday season in their new homes at Crosstown. Additionally, 100 affordable units there will soon welcome their first residents. I'm extremely grateful for the role *you* play in addressing Victoria's housing crisis and setting a new standard for community support and integration.

Going forward, we'll rely on the generosity of people just like you to support Crosstown services such as life and job skills training and some aspects of the new Dr. Joe Haegert Community Health Centre. Please know that you are essential to these services that improve the quality of life of residents and connect them with the critical supports they need to lead healthier, happier lives.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your continued support. With the colder weather on the way and more people asking for help, I hope you'll consider making a donation this fall.

Wishing you and yours a very happy Thanksgiving,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Elin Bjarnason'.

Elin Bjarnason  
Chief Executive Officer

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homeless again. If not for Cool Aid, I'd still be living in my truck. I want to say thank you to everyone who's stepped up to help me."

Jess Thornbury, frontline supervisor at Tally Ho, adds, "I'm super-excited that Brett and all our residents are moving into the homes and

community they deserve. I'd like our donors to know that their hard-earned dollars are being used for thoughtful, innovative projects like Crosstown. Thank you for making a huge difference!"

Together, we're changing lives.

**"I'm super excited that Brett and all our residents are moving into the homes and community they deserve."**

## The Dr. Joe Haegert Community Health Centre

With support from generous people just like you, Cool Aid is working to open a second Community Health Centre (CHC) in our new Crosstown development.

The Dr. Joe Haegert Community Health Centre will expand on the successful model of care we currently deliver to patients at the downtown CHC. At both locations, we'll continue to provide wrap-around health care to people who are homeless and/or challenged by complex mental health and substance use issues.

**In 2018, our downtown CHC served 4,500 patients. Since then, with increasing numbers of people struggling with homelessness, mental health challenges, and affected by a toxic drug supply, our patient roster has grown to 7,000.**

Without CHCs, more marginalized people would end up in their local hospital

### **emergency department.**

In addition to providing care from nurses and doctors, the new Dr. Joe Haegert CHC will provide access to supports such as counselling and physiotherapy, referrals to social workers, and help with finding stable housing.

Mary Chudley, director of health and support services at Cool Aid, says, "The Dr. Joe clinic will be a health care hub. Patients will be seen in a real clinic, not a temporary room set up in a shelter. When not on the road, our mobile health clinics will park there, so our teams can replenish medical supplies. Also, plans are in the works for an on-site pharmacy."

Mary explains that donor support for the Dr. Joe Haegert Community Health Centre will be essential to equipping the



clinic with everything from stethoscopes to a defibrillator. "With more people than ever living on the edge, our funding is stretched. That's why we are asking donors to support this important project to ensure excellent medical care for the most vulnerable among us."

**Thank you for your generosity as we prepare to open the new Dr. Joe Haegert Community Health Centre. ■**

## Your **Generosity** in Action



**54**

**NEW SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS IN CROSSTOWN**



**100**

**NEW AFFORDABLE HOUSING UNITS IN CROSSTOWN**



**56**

**NEW SUPPORTIVE HOUSING UNITS IN THE LILY**



**52,000**

**HEALTH ENCOUNTERS (CHC AND OUTREACH)**

**This is the incredible impact you've helped make so far in 2024:**

## Meet Jane Dewing, Psychiatric Nurse and Former Executive Director of Cool Aid

My husband Dr. Joseph Haegert, our family, and I are thrilled that the new Community Health Centre in Crosstown will be named in his honour.

Dr. Joe was Cool Aid's very first physician and for almost 50 years, he provided deeply compassionate care for homeless patients struggling with addiction and mental health challenges. Dr. Joe was also known as a thoughtful listener, always asking "What can we do to make your day safer?" And, he worked diligently with programs across Cool Aid, including housing and the dental clinic, to provide truly holistic care.

Thank you for your support. With more people than ever facing homelessness and addiction here in Victoria, I'm sure you'll agree that The Dr. Joe Haegert Community Health Centre is vital.

## Meet Dr. Joseph Haegert, Retired Cool Aid Physician

I want to thank you, the great donors, for helping bring the new Dr. Joe Haegert Community Health Centre closer to reality. Your genuine compassion and real generosity have made an enormous difference.

My wife Jane and I met while looking after psychiatric patients in a local hospital. Together, we developed a special affinity for those with chronic schizophrenia.

What people may not know or understand is that many people who are experiencing homelessness have also experienced severe



trauma and have mental health issues, which is something that interested me both personally and professionally. I think that is where I was able to help the most.

The new clinic will help with all of these needs, and together with the downtown clinic, will carry on Cool Aid's tradition of excellent care.

Thank you for supporting this important work.