



COVERDALE COURTWOR^K SOCIETY

Annual Report

2021



Mission

Coverdale strives to decrease barriers within the criminal justice system and provide comprehensive supports so that all women, youth and gender diverse individuals can achieve healing and equity. We work in the community, the courts, and prisons to support and advocate for women and women's issues.

Vision

We hold a vision of creating a community that supports transformation and pathways to healing. We envision an inclusive and just community in which all women and gender diverse persons live with equality and dignity.

Values

- Empathy
- Communication
- Organization
- Critical thinking
- Active listening
- Self-care
- Cultural competence
- Patience
- Professional commitment
- Advocacy

We believe in policies, practices, and programs that are relational and promote healthy connections to communities



A Message from Coverdale's ED & Chair

2021 was an incredible year of change and growth as we built on the work and vision of 2020. Our staff increased from 8 to 42 employees (we made a commitment during the summer to give all staff at least a living wage), our programming and health resources multiplied, and our financial growth rose by 300 %. All this in the midst of a second year of the Covid pandemic which negatively affected court work, counselling and programming with its in-person restrictions. There have been normal growing pains as our organization has adapted and found creative ways of dealing with these new realities. Technology helped us move forward through Zoom, emails and the phone.

The mandate of our Board of directors is to support, make sure that the vision and core values are upheld, and strive to move forward in the vision of what Coverdale might become. The Board provides support and accountability for the organization through our ED Ashley Avery. Another of our responsibilities as a Board is to ensure that we are being fiscally responsible. Monthly statements are given to Board Members to review and to officially accept.

As a board, we continued to plan, work and implement policies in the midst of the pandemic. The Board has 3 main sub-Committees. (Policy – chair: Vanessa Lily, Fund-Raising – chair: Carrie MacInnis, Human Resources-chair: Suzanne Marineau). These committees met separately during the year and then brought recommendation to the whole Board. Each of these committees have made significant contributions.

As a Board, we are very grateful for the leadership and vision of our ED, Ashley Avery. She has navigated this difficult time through grant writing and searching out Foundations that could support the vision and mandates of Coverdale. She recruited excellent staff and mentored many of them. She partnered and networked with other organizations, both non-profit and Government.

Ashley has been faithful in reporting the ongoing work of Coverdale through regular Board meetings, encouraging the Board to understand the vision of the work, and giving us a commentary on the monthly financial statements compiled by our bookkeeper, Arlene Seto. She has also given a higher social media presence to Coverdale.

There were many blessings in this past year but I will focus on only one. This past year we were able to see the fruition of a dream called “Caitlan’s Place”. In the past, many of our clients were sent to jail because they did not have money for bail and there were no alternatives.

Other clients, who were sentenced, did not have a place to live once they had served their jail time. In 2020, we were part of a temporary solution when we partnered with E-Fry and John Howard. Society. However, when this came to an end, there were other opportunities that came to Coverdale. We were able to open “Caitlan’s Place” in January which housed 6 women and non-binary folks. When that structure was demolished, AHANS provided a second house which currently can accommodate 15 people. We felt like we were in the midst of a miracle and we were.

This has come about only through Ashley’s vision and advocacy, partnership with generous Foundations, donors, supporters, (Please see separate acknowledgement in our AGM booklet) networking and HARD WORK! Thank You. It is our belief that this has great potential for help and healing for many who are vulnerable and marginalized in our society.

A Message from Coverdale's ED & Chair

Personally, I have been very grateful to work with our Board who gave of both their time and their skills to move forward in this vision of Coverdale. A special thank you to Brittany for her record keeping and to Val Macdonald who, as Vice Chair was really my co-chair and always had words of wisdom for me.

A fond farewell to Board members Anna Sadofsky and Danielle MacDonald for your contribution to Coverdale before resigning. We will miss you. Finally, thank you again to Ashley for being the visionary, protector and spokesperson to carry the heart of Coverdale.

Take Care and Be Kind

Rev. Dr. Ida Armstrong-Whitehouse (Chair)

2021 will forever be remembered as a year of significant challenge and transformational growth. With the opening of Caitlan's Place bolstered by a tripartite agreement between Coverdale, the province (DCS) and AHANS (Reaching Home) we began addressing the homelessness-jail cycle in Nova Scotia through supported housing and evidence-based wrap-around supports. This work is making strides in reducing remand rates for women in the province, a well documented issue of injustice and inequity. Women experiencing homelessness, poverty, addiction and mental health issues are more likely to be denied bail and held in jail because they lack stability in important areas like housing and community supports that are necessary to meet the requirements of bail. We have stood in our purpose and stepped up to serve those who turn to us for support. An incredible investment from the Northpine Foundation has catapulted our organization into a space where we can focus on innovation and creating transformational pathways for criminalized women by expanding court and bail services and providing alternatives to incarceration and solutions to homelessness for this population.

When another wave of the pandemic heightened the risk of prisoners in provincial jail, our team led another COVID-19 decarceration emergency shelter and assisted with the release of 32 women from jail. This work further highlighted the need for harm reduction and housing first focused services for women who cycle in and out of jail, hospitals and homelessness. The collaborative work led by Chief Judge Williams of the Provincial Court brought together stakeholders in justice, housing and community to align efforts and address any issues that arose. This leadership from within the system was critical to not only addressing the crisis at hand across sectors and silos, but for laying the groundwork for lasting change through a relational approach.

I want to thank the Coverdale Board of Directors for being productive and supportive. With special acknowledgments to Ida and Valerie who have stood by my side. Thank you for your hard work this past year, your dedication helped us reach our goals. I deeply appreciate every member of the Board for showing relentless effort for this organization. This year the Board voted to increase the Coverdale minimum wage to ABOVE the living wage in Nova Scotia. You have set a phenomenal example for our community and have advanced equity for women working in this field.

Special thanks to Jim Graham, ED of AHANS, Sara Tessier of Northpine, our colleagues at the Department of Community Services and the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility (East Unit) for believing in Coverdale and collaborating for meaningful change. This work does not happen in silos and the various collaborative and restorative efforts are at the heart of any feat for equity and justice.

Finally, to the talented and compassionate team whose dedication has helped us live out our mission. It gives me great pride to be a leader for this team, the success our organization has experienced would not be possible without their contributions.

In Solidarity

Ashley Avery, Executive Director



ADVANCING OUR MISSION THIS YEAR

Addressing the homelessness-jail cycle

122

women were provided housing, housing support, eviction prevention and post release support

Reducing rates of remand in Nova Scotia

84

women were provided bail support and supervision and alternatives to incarceration

Supporting women navigating the courts

136

women assisted in navigating the court system

Improving Women's Access to Justice

Enhancing social and psychological safety

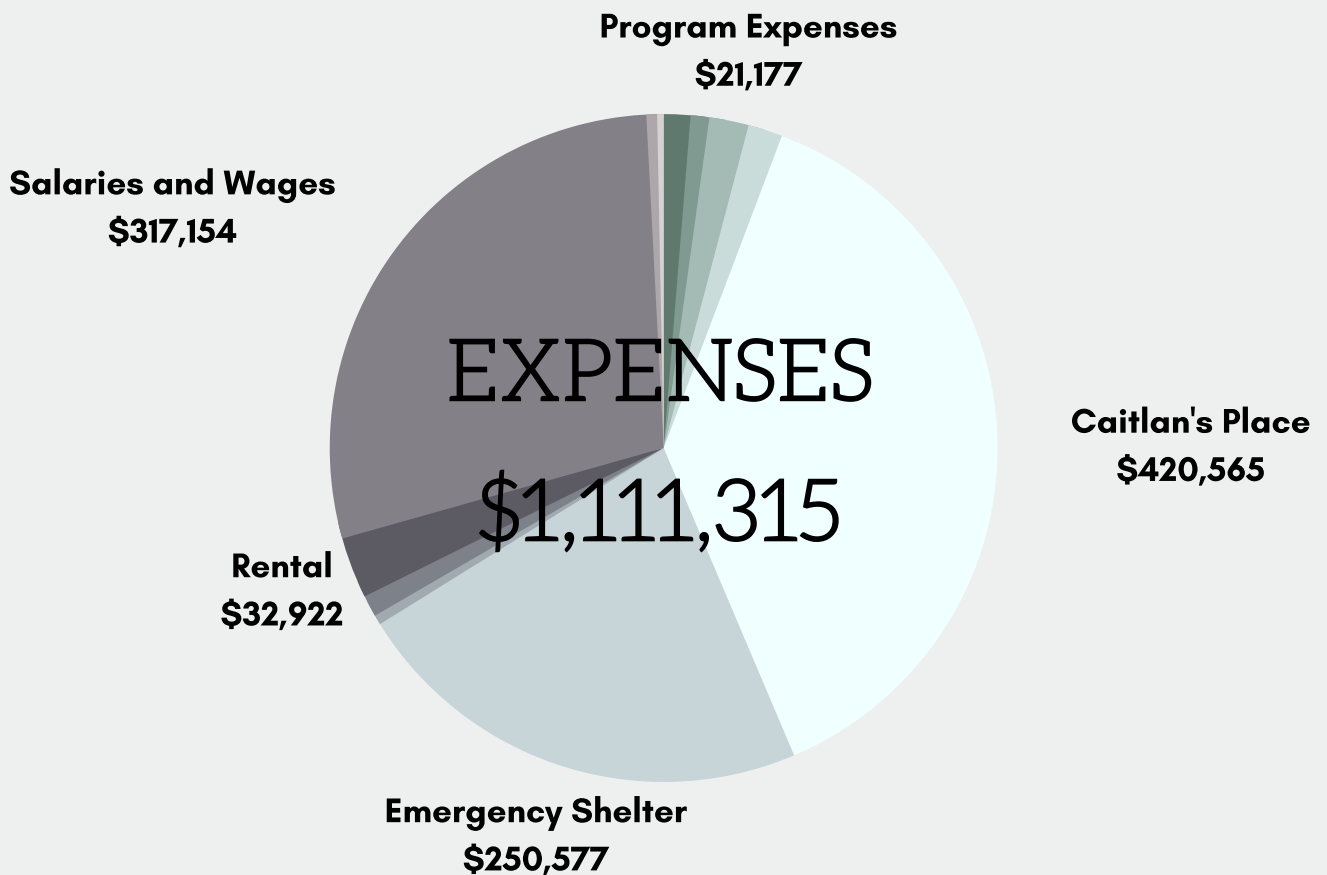
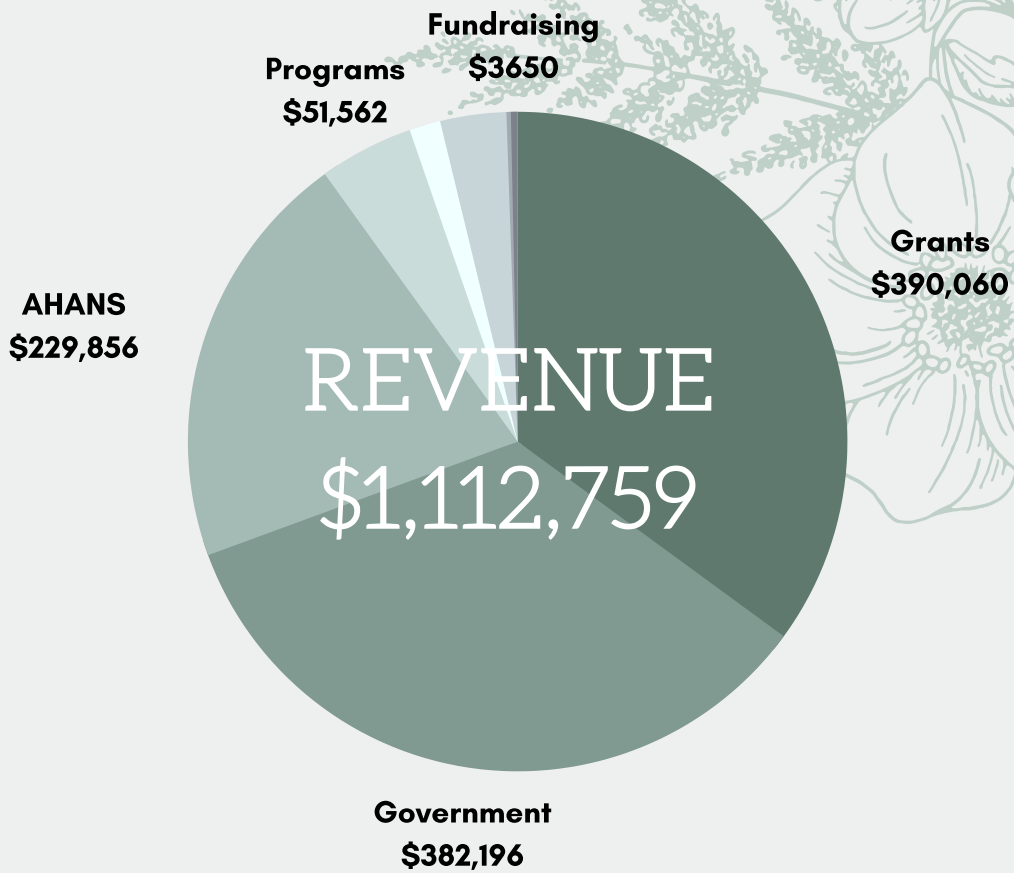
521

unique interventions that supported women experiencing mental health, trauma, addiction and victimization

"I am not free while any woman is unfree, even when her shackles are very different from my own"

Audre Lorde 1981

FINANCIALS



2021 ACTIVITIES

Court Support Clinic
Street Outreach
EC Emergency Shelter- Partnership with EFRY
Cultural Programming
REACH - Addiction Program
Bail Support & Supervision Program
Yoga Program
Residential Reintegration Program
Restorative Reintegration- Collaboration with CNSCF
Youth and Culture Program - Partnership with YMCA
Grocery Support Program
Family Court Support
Family Visitations
Supported Housing
Therapeutic Counselling
Art Therapy
Cooking Program
No Longer on My Own - Multiagency partnership
Understanding Your Rights
Parenting Inside Out Program
Adopt A Resident - Christmas Support
Club 200 Fundraiser
Recovery Day Halifax - Caitlan Greenwell Award
Community All Service Drop-in (Post Encampment raids)
Mothers Support Group
Research Study on Maternal Incarceration - Collaboration with Wellness Within

Nova Scotia

Hotels continue to act as housing stop-gap for hundreds of Nova Scotians

Halifax study highlights experiences of LGBTQ people in criminal justice system



Survey participants describe being discriminated against, belittled and disrespected

Feleshia Chandler · CBC News · Posted: Mar 25, 2021 10:05 PM AT | Last Updated: March 25, 2021

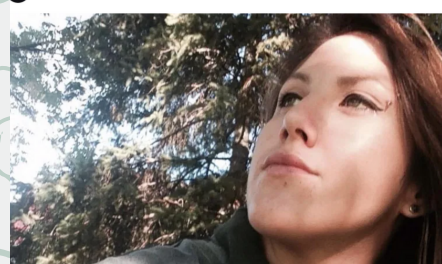


New Halifax transition house commemorates late woman who longed for its creation



Zaitlan's Place opens Monday with 6 beds for women and trans people

Taryn Grant · CBC News · Posted: Feb 21, 2021 6:00 AM AT | Last Updated: February 21, 2021



CANADA

Free legal advice offered to those charged in Halifax encampment protest



By Amber Fryday · Global News
Posted August 25, 2021 5:53 pm



FEATURED INCLUSION

Caring for criminalized mothers

By Mirinda Bray and Ashley Avery · May 9, 2021

In Halifax, living wage employers include [Adsum House](#), which has paid its staff a living wage since 2016, [Cyclesmith](#), which started paying its staff a living wage in September, and [Coverdale Courtwork Society](#), which also started paying its staff a living wage in September.



YOUTH JUSTICE

Early Intervention and Prevention

The Youth Justice Project provides culturally responsive youth services delivered by a social worker. The project coordinator facilitates Indigenous and African Nova Scotian connections on an individual and group basis. This program can assist individuals with their personal wellness goals through a cultural lens.

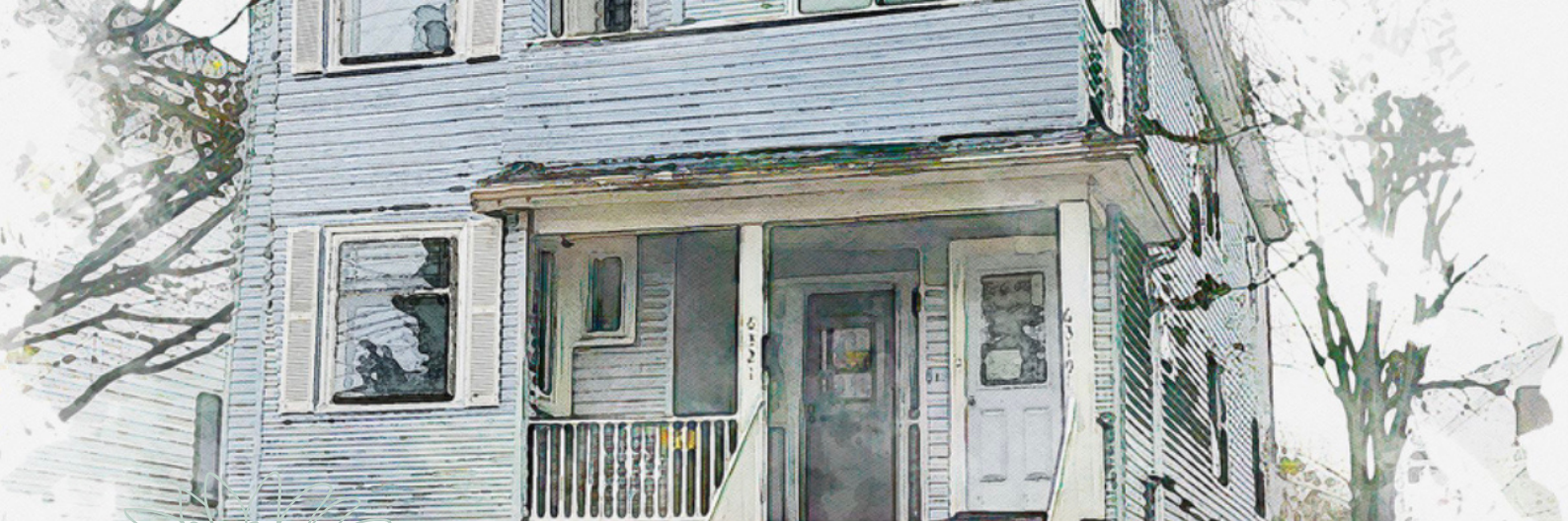
The programs roots are connected to theories such as Afrocentric theory, Indigenous perspectives and Anti-racism. The overall goal of this program is to have a space where youth can be authentic, creative, expressive and receptive to the idea of “culture” and how it differs globally and situationally.

African/Black practices are special within this program. One of the main reasons being that the co-creator has used her lived experience as a tool to shape this program.

In partnership with the YMCA, a youth program called **Youth and Culture** is facilitated in the community. The groups are open to teens (girls, trans, non-binary) age 15-18. The girls have covered topics such as Healthy Relationships, Leadership, Healthy Living, Positive Social Media usage and recreational activities like Zumba and Yoga.

The goal is to have youth be at the center of their understanding and learning, while being aware of the importance of Indigenous and Afrocentric practices and strategies.





CAITLAN'S PLACE

Creating Supported Housing

In February of 2021 Coverdale received funding to pilot a housing initiative aimed to address the housing crisis and respond to the gaps in housing options for women exiting incarceration. This is known as the jail to homelessness cycle. After securing a rental property, Caitlan's Place opened its doors with space for 6 women. An incredible team of staff came on board to operate the home and within days the beds were filled. Caitlan's Place offered low barrier, affordable and supported housing for women experiencing homelessness, mental illness, addiction and the criminal justice system. When the lease on the house came to an end, we worked hard to form new pathways for Caitlan's Place to continue serving the community. In September of 2021, the Affordable Housing Association and the Department of Community Services entered into agreements with Coverdale to make this home a permanent part of the community.

Today, Caitlan's Place provides 15 affordable units, 24/7 staffing and comprehensive wrap-around support services including meals, counselling, group programs, resident employment opportunities, court support and mental health and addictions services.

Total Residents Served 39





PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Housing & Justice During COVID-19

As part of our ongoing efforts to support the deepening needs of our community during the pandemic, Coverdale worked with the **Department of Community Services** and the **Elizabeth Fry Society** to operate a 10-room emergency shelter for women exiting jail. While the corrections system worked to reduce the numbers of persons in custody, sizeable demands on housing and appropriate supports were placed upon the community. At Coverdale, we saw this demand and worked tirelessly to address the gaps. We worked with all levels of Government to implement solutions and reduce harm.

We supported 36 women experiencing homelessness in hotels. We also provided:

- 24/7 staffing
- Basic needs (clothing, hygiene items)
- Access to Technology - free cell phones, minutes and computers
- Virtual Counselling
- Groceries / Food Cards
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Rapid Tests
- Harm Reduction Supplies
- Housing Support
- Recreational Outings
- Reintegration Services
- Crisis support

There is a significant reciprocal relationship between homelessness and incarceration; that is, each one increases the risk for the other. While post-incarceration homelessness has always been a concern, the pandemic has brought about a crisis and sense of urgency in our community to find meaningful solutions. We need more affordable housing; however, simply providing housing will not eliminate the existence of homelessness, given all of its complexities. We are committed to breaking this viscous cycle and providing **evidence-based, sustainable and economical solutions** that will create transformation and pathways to wellness.





COURT AND BAIL SUPPORT

The court support program was transformed greatly due to the pandemic. With no access to courts and most matters occurring by phone, we had to pivot our services to ensure that we understood the changing needs and responded accordingly. This included ensuring people had access to technology, reminding women of their court appearances and supporting them with their phone matters. **In October we launched Project RISEUP which is piloting targeted interventions aimed to improve justice system experiences for women.** Court Support Clinics are now operating in partnership with organizations that directly serve individuals experiencing homelessness. Reducing breaches, remand rates, and recidivism for women are key objectives for this project.

In addition to criminal court support, Coverdale received many requests to support mothers navigating the family justice system and child protection matters. **We continue to work with the Access to Justice Institute of Nova Scotia, Be The Peace Institute and THANS** on a WAGE funded research project exploring family justice issues and laying the ground for future service provision in this area.

In 2021 Coverdale launched the Bail Supervision and Support Program

This offers assistance to women in their application and maintenance of bail. Staff can create bail plans and provide testimony in court. We assist women to understand their bail conditions, address their unmet social needs, and restore/build strong connections with their communities. Services can be accessed by women in courts, jail, and the community. Community supervision provides an alternative to the traditional surety model.



ADVOCACY



RESEARCH

This year we participated in 23 independent and Government led research studies across the province as **subject matter experts** on the experiences of women in the criminal justice system, from the vantage point of a community service provider.

DROP-IN FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY ENCAMPMENT RAIDS

On August 18th when homeless encampments were raided, we joined our community in solidarity and offered on the ground supports to those impacted using a restorative and human rights based approach.

2SLGBTQ+ JUSTICE

We interviewed 30 participants from the Halifax Regional Municipality who identified as LGBTQ and had some degree of involvement with the criminal justice system and revealed deep inequities.

LIVABLE WAGE



Coverdale Courtwork Society
@CoverdaleHFX

Today we announce that the minimum wage for Coverdale employees has been increased to \$22.75. The labour of women, trans & non-binary folks in this work is deeply valued and we are committed to providing an equitable, fair wage that our staff can live on. [#LabourDay](#) [#LivableWage](#)

7:48 PM · Sep 6, 2021 · Twitter for iPhone

A SEAT AT THE TABLE

We participated in the following committees:

- Police Charging and Release Practices small working group
- Bail Verification and Supportive Housing small working group
- CAS Governance
- Collaborative Community Reintegration Team
- Virtual Court Small Working Group
- National Youth Justice Committee
- Metro Agency Working Group
- Black Women's Working Group
- Gender Based Violence Learning Lab





OUR 2021 TEAM

EMPLOYEES

Alexandra Arsenault
Allison Curran
Amanda Wilneff
Amber Stewart
Anise McKay
Anne Marie Houston
Ashley Avery
Bria Symonds
Brittany Bellmare
Brittany Lisk
Carmen Baettig
Chantz Silver
Christa Carree
DeJan Brennen
Elisha Monteith
Emma Palumbo
Grisha Cowal
Hannah Moore

Heather Roberts
Helena Hehir
Hilary Murphy
Holly Annand
Jill Kelly
Julianne Butt
Katie MacDonald
Katie Roberts
Kayleigh Weatherby
Martha Kerr
Melissa MEME Williams
Michelle Chisolm
Michelle Henry
Mirinda Bray
Olateju E Alpama
Olivia Polk
Rachel Salter
Raquel Stewart

Roberta Morrison
Sara Tessier
Senna Hollihan
Stephanie Cook
Summer Johnson
Wyndolyn Brown

BOARD MEMBERS

Rev. Dr. Ida Armstrong Whitehouse
Valerie Macdonald
Monica Bell-Ekanem
Emma Pink
Carbo Kwan
Brittany Sutherland
Janis Aitken
Vanessa Lily
Suzanne Marineau
Carrie McInnis
Danielle MacDonald
Anna Sadofsky

STUDENT PLACEMENTS AND VOLUNTEERS

Victoria Boutilier
Anise McKay
Holly Annand
Christina Benvie
Nicole Wright
Alex Belitzky
Sara Tessier
Megan Conrad
Clare Heggie
Eliza McCullum

*Thank!
You!*



2021 AGM MINUTES
Coverdale Courtwork Society
Annual General Meeting Minutes
Zoom
Monday March 15th, 2021 6:00 pm – 7:03 pm

Coverdale AGM 2021

In Attendance:

Ida Armstrong-Whitehouse: Current Chair of the Board
Janis Aitken – Board Member
Ashley Avery – ED of Coverdale she/her
Monica Bell-Ekanem - Coverdale Board Member
Carbo Kwan – Coverdale Board member
Vanessa Lilly- Member of the Board
Danielle MacDonald – Board Member
Valerie MacDonald – Presbyterian Representative, Vice Chair
Carrie MacInnis – Board Member and did a placement 3 or 4 years ago.
Kathy MacKay – Former member of the Board
Suzanne Marineau – Board Member
Roberta Morrison – Court Support Navigator
Hilary Murphy – Program Coordinator They/Them
Emma Pink – Board Member and friend of Coverdale
Arlene Seto – Bookkeeper for Coverdale
Brittany Sutherland – secretary
Bria Symonds – Cultural Coordinator she/her
Sara Tessier – Peer Mentor of Coverdale

Regrets: Anna Sadofsky

Recorder: Brittany Sutherland

Welcomes and Introduction of Board Members – Ida Whitehouse

Adoption of the Agenda for the Annual General Meeting

Motion – Roberta Morrison, seconded – Janis Aitken, approved by all.

Adoption of Minutes of 2020 Annual General Meeting

Motion – Brittany Sutherland, seconded – Emma Pink, approved by all who attended the AGM last year.

Presentation of Executive Director's Report – Ashley Avery

Ashley Avery presented a United Way video that showed case the JEC program that Coverdale partnered with Elizabeth Fry Society and John Howard Society. The project supported 55 people.

Access to justice is still very problematic and the inequalities within justice have increased during Covid-19. The province was not equipped for Covid- 19 in relation to the Courts, Corrections, Housing and Health Care.

In the fall Coverdale launched Family Justice Program – Parenting Inside Out – secured license through 100 Women Who Care - the program helps to improve reintegration and repair relationships lost in the family unit.

Cultural Pathways – DOJ Canada - Systematic Racism – urgent access to Justice that exists advocating for change.

2021 AGM MINUTES
Coverdale Courtwork Society
Annual General Meeting Minutes
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Monday March 15th, 2021 6:00 pm – 7:03 pm

Approval of the Executive Director's Report

Motion – Ashley Avery seconded – Sara Tessier Motion Carried

Presentation of Chairperson – Ida Whitehouse

During the pandemic, the Board was concerned that we would not be able to assist our clientele. How could we move forward? Board and Staff worked together.

During the time we rented new office space, hired new staff (core staff increased from 3 -8) and with the help of grants were able to, in partnership with E-Fry and John Howard Society able to provide remand clients with alternative accommodations. The Board is very grateful for Ashley and is very appreciative of her hard work. The Board also acknowledges Kathy Peach and Arlene Seto's contribution to the bookkeeping role.

Approval of the Presentation by the Chairperson

Motion – Ida Whitehouse, seconded – Monica Bell-Ekanem Motion Carried

Presentation of Nominations for Board of Directors 2021- Val MacDonald

Re-appointment of all members and officers of the board with the exception of Tami Meredith who resigned in December.

Chair – Ida Whitehouse

Vice Chair – Val MacDonald

Secretary – Brittany Sutherland

Motion - Val MacDonald, seconded – Roberta Morrison Motion carried

The 2021 -2022 Board Members are:

Janis Aitken

Ashley Avery

Monica Bell-Ekanem

Carbo Kwan

Vanessa Lilly

Danielle MacDonald

Valerie MacDonald

Carrie MacInnis

Suzanne Marineau

Emma Pink

Anna Sadofsky

Brittany Sutherland

Ida Whitehouse

Motion - Val MacDonald, seconded – Monica Bell-Ekanem Motion carried

Presentation of Financial Report for 2020- Arlene Seto

Did Audit with Sutherland Watt where everything was presented fairly and the results of our operations and cash flows for year ended in accordance with their standards.

There was a significant growth in revenue due to Covid-19 Funds, increase in Program Funding, and increase in donations.

Coverdale's Expenses went through a similar growth and change.

Approval of the Financial Report

Motion – Danielle MacDonald seconded – Hilary Murphy Motion Carried

Appointment of Auditors – Sutherland Watt Accounting Firm

Motion – Janis Aitken seconded – Brittany Sutherland Motion Carried

Adjournment – Motion Roberta Morrison

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many thanks to our 2021 funders

Northpine Foundation
Government of Nova Scotia
Department of Justice Canada
Affordable Housing Association of Nova Scotia
Canadian Women's Foundation
Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Women and Gender Equality
Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia
Law Foundation of Nova Scotia
Second Harvest
Community Foundation of Nova Scotia
Seeds of Hope

and the countless other funders, donors, collaborators, contributors and champions that make our work possible!



We thank you for your continued support in our organization

Contact

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admin@coverdale.ca
[@coverdaleHFX](https://www.instagram.com/coverdaleHFX)

