



2023-2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Chimo Community Services

*Empowered communities free from
injustice, violence and crisis*

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Our Mission

To promote justice and address violence by providing integrated services, education, and housing programs designed to foster well-being and healing for people in crisis.

Our Vision

Empowered communities free from injustice, violence and crisis.

Our Values

- Partnership** - Working collaboratively both within our organization and our community.
- Respect** - Recognizing each other's differences and showing consideration for our community and one another.
- Integrity** - Committing to high standards of honesty, confidentiality, and accountability for our words and actions.
- Diversity** - Providing inclusive, culturally-responsive, and equitable services with compassion and respect.
- Empowerment** - Devoting to positive actions and decisions that promote the well-being of our community, our organization, and every individual we serve.

At Chimo Community Services, diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) are core to who we are and what we do. We value and embrace the diversity of people both within our organization and within the community that we serve. Chimo is committed to contributing to a community where there is respect and equity. We acknowledge that there are barriers that exclude certain people from full participation in society, and we will continue to work to ensure that our policies, programs, and services are accessible to and inclusive of all.

Chimo is situated on the traditional and ancestral territory of the S'cáwaθn Məsteyəxʷ (Tsawwassen People), and the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the Kwantlen, xʷməθkʷəyəm (Musqueam), Stó:lō, and Stz'uminus Peoples.

Message from the Board President and Executive Director

The 2023-2024 fiscal year was a **year** full of **discovery, reflection** and **new beginnings** for the agency. While our mission is, and will always be, our guiding star, the way we pursue it and advance it must continually evolve to meet the changing needs of our community; **needs** which are **growing more complex, more urgent** and simply just growing in **sheer volume** day after day.

Throughout the past year we have increased our programming, strengthened existing partnerships, and developed new ones to do everything that we possibly can to meet these needs. Staff across all program areas have focused on refining services, leveraging existing resources, and committing to a culture of quality improvement to ensure that Chimo can continue its legacy of being that agency that people confidently turn to when they are facing their most difficult of moments.

A **few notable highlights** of the past year include:

- Our successful development of the **Sexual Assault Services (SAS) Counselling program**, funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General, which provides individual counselling to adult women and gender-diverse people who have experienced sexual assault.
- In November, we were proud to be a part of the **launch** of the **9-8-8 Suicide Crisis Helpline**, funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada. As one of almost 40 partner agencies in Canada, we are deeply committed to ensuring suicide prevention resources are readily available to everyone across the country.
- Once again this year, it was a pleasure to join together with our community at Gilmore Park United Church to participate in the **Coldest Night of the Year Walk**. A sincere thank you to the staff, volunteers, walkers and sponsors who make this event a success year after year. More important than the money we raise, is the awareness that is raised about the challenges faced by so many of our neighbours.

There were many **notable successes** over the year, but there were also **challenges**. Richmond Caring Place, the location of Chimo's main office, increased rental costs by over 60% to fund much needed major repairs to the building. While the rent at Caring Place is still below market rates, this increase did require us to vacate our 2 satellite worksites and co-locate these programs at the main office. Securing **adequate, accessible and affordable space**, particularly in the current rental market, continues to be a very real challenge.

We are already firmly engaged in moving forward with our projects and plans for the 2024-2025 year, but as I look back on the past fiscal year I am truly inspired by the incredible leadership, dedication and perseverance of all staff and volunteers. Our achievements this year stand as a testament to the dedication and hard work of everyone.

Deborah Track
Interim Board President

Slinder Bhatti
Executive Director

2023-2024 Board of Directors

President: Geoff Cowman

Vice Presidents: Gurveer (Goldy) Bhullar, Frederika Renaud

Treasurers: Joan Mar, Jason Li

Secretary: Deborah Track

Directors-At-Large: Richard Da Costa, Diana Gabriel, R. Simon Kaebe, Shivam Khurania, Helen Mau

Program Highlights

Housing

Nova Transition House

Nova Transition House is a safe housing facility for women and children seeking refuge from domestic violence; it is the **only transition house** located in **Richmond**. During their stay, residents are provided with information, emotional support, practical assistance, and advocacy. Nova House is funded by BC Housing and private donations from the community. This past year, our **amazing Nova House team** worked hard to **streamline** case management systems, **strengthen** community partnerships, develop new program offerings, and make improvements to the house to increase our clients' feelings of safety in a homelike setting. **96 women and children** were provided safe housing and supports at Nova House, however over **550 crisis requests** for shelter were turned away due to us being at capacity.

The **need** for **adequate, safe transitional housing** for women and children fleeing domestic violence in our community **far exceeds** the resources we have. The current housing crisis continues to make it very difficult for our residents to find affordable housing after their stay. Despite this challenge, we were able to **support 75%** of our residents to move into **stable housing** after their stay with us.

100%
of residents left feeling equipped to deal with daily challenges, and aware of community resources

94%
of clients developed safety plans with staff support

92%
of clients did not return to their abuser after leaving Nova House



Homelessness Prevention Program

Our Homelessness Prevention Program provides individuals identified as belonging to higher risk groups with rental subsidies and support services to support them in maintaining existing housing and/or accessing needed housing in the private market. HPP is funded by BC Housing.

In the 2023-2024 year, **36 clients were supported** with rental subsidies and **many more** were provided with assistance through case planning and advocacy activities to access much needed community based services. Of the clients served, **72%** were fleeing **domestic violence**, **3%** identified as **being Indigenous** and **25%** were **leaving hospital**. The need for this program continues to grow month to month, and finding **appropriate, affordable housing** continues to be a **significant challenge** in our current rental housing market. HPP subsidies are time limited with a focus on supporting clients to identify goals which will support them in being able to maintain their housing without a subsidy. This can include supporting clients to enter the work force, qualify for additional government benefits, budgeting, and strengthening lifeskills. **97%** of HPP clients **remained housed 1 year** after receiving HPP supports.

Nova House Resident Testimonial

“ I can't believe the incredible transformation in my life. I now have a home, separated from a difficult situation after ten years, have my kids with me, receive income assistance, and am working towards obtaining a certificate for future employment. This feels like a miracle, a new lease on life that I will celebrate as my 'new birthday.'

You were there for me when I needed support. You helped me move forward, find a path to success, offered legal assistance, connected me with a lawyer, aided in my immigration and court processes, and helped me secure housing, gave me food, and a safe place to sleep.

When I first arrived in Canada, I was lost and scared, unsure of how to protect myself and my children. I felt scared, disappointed, sad, and exhausted, desperately seeking help. After finding information on the legal aid website, I reached out to the North Shore Women's Centre. [They] responded to my email, encouraged me to visit, and listened to my story. After a few hours, [they] arranged for me to come to Nova House. I didn't have time to think about what was happening; it was all so overwhelming. Eventually, I left my home and found safety at Nova House.

After six months, I can now look back and think about that day without being overwhelmed with fear. **Nova House, Chimo, Canada, saved my life and granted me a new chance at life. I'm eternally grateful.** You were so kind and supportive, and I will never forget your impact. You helped me stand on my own two feet and start anew. Without your help, it was impossible to rent a house. I hope that one day I can pay it forward and support other women who are facing similar challenges. As mothers, we can come together to create a better world, teaching others that everyone deserves peace and happiness.



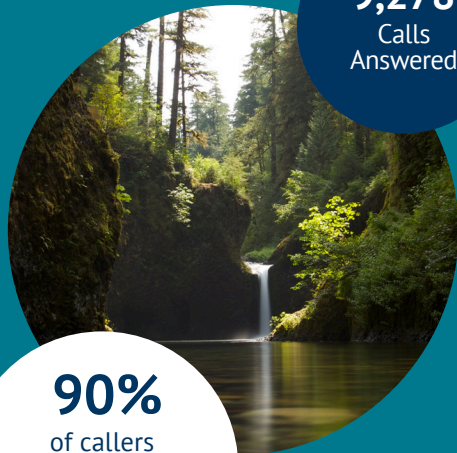
Crisis Lines

Chimo Crisis Line

Chimo's Provincial Crisis Line operates from **8 am to midnight seven days** a week. The program provides short term help via telephone to individuals experiencing a **personal crisis** with the **aim of supporting the caller** to increase their ability to cope with the situation that is causing them distress. A range of supports are provided, including emotional support, resource referrals, suicide risk assessment, and intervention. Our Crisis Line is funded by BC Mental Health and Substance Use Services, a program of the Provincial Health Services Authority (PHSA) and the City of Richmond.



72%
of callers demonstrated an increased ability to cope with their situation



9,278
Calls Answered

90%
of callers completed a Safety Plan and a Risk Assessment

This past fiscal year, the Crisis Line experienced a **number of changes**, including the implementation of a **new cloud based calling software** which has allowed Crisis Lines across the province to **operate** as one **large network**. This change has resulted in **shorter wait times**, **fewer calls going unanswered**, increased collaboration between centres and assurance that no matter what or when the call, it will be answered by a skilled responder. The result is that more calls are being answered – meaning **more people are being heard** when they need it most.

9-8-8

In November 2023, the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) **launched its new National Suicide Helpline, 9-8-8**, a phone and text line dedicated to providing support to people across Canada, with a focus on suicide prevention. 9-8-8 is **available 24/7** so that people can quickly access support no matter the time of day.

9-8-8 was created to make it as simple as possible for people to get the support they need. Suicide does not discriminate; it affects people of all ages and backgrounds across Canada. Statistics reveal a staggering average of **4500 lives lost to suicide** each year, amounting to approximately 12 people per day. For every person lost to suicide, **many more experience thoughts** of suicide or suicide attempts. Behind these numbers are **families shattered, communities impacted**, and a collective responsibility to address this crisis.

9-8-8 is more than just a phone call. It is a **lifeline for individuals in every province and territory, every hour and every day** of the year. Our 9-8-8 responders are here to listen to people who need to talk, and to support people to cope with thoughts of hopelessness and distress. Responders support people to keep themselves safe in the moment which may include developing a safety plan together. 9-8-8 responders can also suggest resources that callers or texters might want to contact for ongoing support. Chimo proudly stands alongside more than **40 other crisis lines** spread across Canada to ensure that every call is answered by skilled, compassionate and knowledgeable Crisis Responders.

Advocacy

Outreach & Advocacy

Our Outreach & Advocacy (O&A) Program provides individuals with practical assistance related to **poverty law, domestic violence, crisis prevention issues, income security, tenancy, employment law and workers' rights, consumer law, and debt issues.** As well, each winter/spring, we offer a **low-income tax clinic** to people in our community. O&A is funded by the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Law Foundation. In the past year, we assisted over **500 unique individuals** in our O&A program. Many of our clients know our volunteer advocates by name and trust them to help with challenging issues. With the affordability crisis affecting almost all Canadians, O&A experienced a **significant influx of unhoused clients** in the last year who were seeking assistance in accessing BC Housing programs and waitlists, as well as information and assistance regarding shelters and assisted living. As such, we pivoted to address this need, and our advocates worked tirelessly to help our clients find safe and affordable housing. Our services continue to remain in **high demand** and we consistently have a **waitlist** of 60 individuals needing our services.



50%
of clients
received
services related
to income
security



**O&A services
provided in**
62% English, 22%
Cantonese, 11%
Mandarin, 4% other
(e.g., Arabic, Dari,
Vietnamese)

Family Law Advocacy

Chimo's Family Law Advocacy (FLA) Program provides individuals with support as they navigate through family law matters (e.g., Separation Agreements, Custody, Child Support). While we do not offer legal representation in court, we provide clients with legal knowledge that helps them to solve their problems. The areas of service we offer in the FLA program include **information, education, and capacity building; triage and referral; summary advice; dispute resolution;** and representation services. Our FLA program is funded by the Law Foundation of BC.



48

Family Law
Advocacy
clients

77%
of FLA
clients were
female

Our Advocates accompanied clients to court more frequently this past year, which allowed us to provide **language interpretation** and **emotional support** during these challenging experiences. We have had the privilege of supporting many of our FLA clients from the **start of their matter** all the way to **resolution** supporting them to make more informed decisions about family law related matters, creating **more stability and peace** in their lives.

Settlement

Our Settlement Program assists recent immigrants and permanent resident/Canadian citizenship applicants with meeting a variety of **settlement-related needs**, including **permanent resident/citizenship applications, employment searches, housing, government benefit applications, medical, and children's services**. We provide Settlement services through customized workshops, personalized support, and comprehensive wraparound services. Our workshops are particularly beneficial for **fostering a sense of community and belonging** amongst our clients. Chimo's Settlement Program is funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.



Settlement clients' first languages

43% Mandarin,
33% Cantonese, 9%
Ukrainian, 14%
other (e.g., Arabic,
Spanish)



This past year, our Settlement Program **supported** almost **600 unique individuals**. Exciting program additions included facilitated workshops to teach Ukrainian-speaking newcomers how to complete permanent residency applications and income tax forms. **Participants** reported that the workshops were both **informative** and helped them to **feel more confident** during their entry into Canada. We also facilitated workshops in **sign language** to support newcomers who are differently abled to ensure that individuals with disabilities receive personalized support and information in a manner which is inclusive and accessible to them. We look forward to continuing these initiatives with our community partners.

Imagine having to leave everything that you have ever worked for behind. Your house, your business, your friends...your way of life.

Having to start with nothing in a foreign country with no home, a new language, new social norms and a system you don't understand. This is the reality faced by a family of nine from the Democratic Republic of the Congo who embarked on a journey to escape the violence and trauma of their hometown. Through the generous sponsorship of a local church, they came to Canada with the hope of a better life, a safer life. Each member faced unique challenges in language learning, employment skills, health and more, having endured the hardships of conflict and displacement firsthand.

Working in close collaboration with their church sponsors, our Settlement staff worked diligently to ensure that this family had the necessary access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities.

From our English Conversation Circles and our Job Search workshops, we were able to equip this family with the tools needed to thrive in their new home; we also guided the family on how to engage with the local community and encouraged their participation in community events and activities. Having overcome many obstacles, this family is now on a steady settlement pathway.

Counselling

Chimo provides 4 counselling programs to vulnerable individuals and families in our community: **Coping with Obstacles and Processing Endings (COPE)**, **Stopping the Violence (STV)**, **Sexual Assault Services (SAS)**, and **Prevention, Education, Advocacy, Counselling and Empowerment (PEACE) for Children and Youth Experiencing Violence**. Our counselling programs provide support to adults who are experiencing a transition through a life event such as **grief, bereavement**, or other challenging life circumstances; self-identifying women and gender-diverse people who have **experienced gender-based violence, sexual assault**, and/or **childhood abuse**; and children and youth who have **experienced violence or abuse** in their homes. Programs are funded by Vancouver Coastal Health and the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General.

“My hour session is so rewarding, ... It is a time of feeling safe and wanting to share without being judged. I always leave feeling lighter..”

In the past year, we **launched** both our **COPE and SAS** counselling programs. **77% of SAS hours** were spent in direct service, meaning that **within 7 months** of operation, we already **exceeded our direct service goal of 75%**. Our COPE team was also very quick to mobilize, with **97% of those clients** being seen by a counsellor **within 2 weeks** of initial contact. We are excited to expand our counselling services so we can provide emotional support to even more vulnerable people in our community! Our counsellors use evidence-based therapies to help clients process past traumas, learn coping techniques, and make significant changes in their lives that improve psychological well-being.

121

counselling clients

100%

of clients reported an increase in their ability to cope with their situation

1,954

counselling sessions delivered

Community Engagement

Our Community Engagement (CE) Program offers a range of educational programs and workshops in Richmond schools that are designed to **increase awareness of community support services**, and **social and emotional life-skills**. The intended outcome is to increase the resiliency of youth. CE is funded by the BC Community Gaming Grant. A major component of CE is our Peace of Mind workshops – a series of workshops delivered in Richmond secondary schools that focus on aspects of socio-emotional wellbeing. This past year, we delivered over **150 workshops to 3600 students** across Richmond. This is a **23% increase** in the number of workshops delivered and a **29% increase** in the number of workshop attendees, as compared to the prior year. We also added **two new workshops** to this program: **Mental Health and Building Resiliency** and **Anti-Bullying**. In the past year, we established a **new partnership** with KPU and delivered Peace of Mind workshops to post-secondary students. We resumed a **long-standing partnership** with Supporting Families and **co-facilitated a group** for children affected by parental mental illness and substance abuse.

99%

of teachers agreed/strongly agreed that the workshop will make a difference in the lives of their students



“Thanks to these workshops, students have become more comfortable talking about mental health and seeking help for themselves. I believe these presentations have enabled more students to self-advocate for their mental wellbeing.”

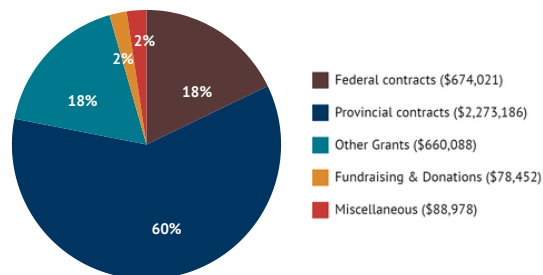
Financial Summary

Treasurer's Report

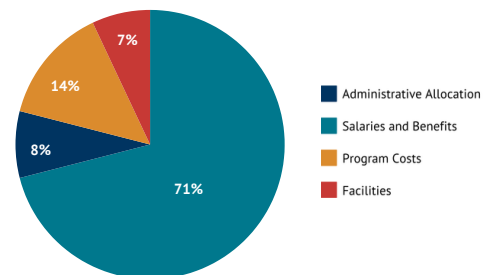
At the close of the fiscal year on March 31, 2024, Chimo showcased robust financial health, with current assets surpassing \$1,460k and current liabilities at \$700k. Revenues for the year climbed to \$3,770k, marking a \$770k increase from the previous year. Notably, half of this revenue growth resulted from securing the 9-8-8 contract with the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health. On the expense side, costs rose by \$670k, driven primarily by salary increases due to the new Collective Agreement, the addition of new staff for the 9-8-8 program, and some extraordinary expenses. Overall, Chimo concluded the fiscal year with a net surplus of \$110k. This positive result highlights the unwavering dedication and hard work of the entire Chimo Community Services Team, including our staff, volunteers, and leadership, whose efforts were instrumental in achieving this success.

Jason Li, Treasurer

Sources of Revenue



Total Expenditures



Contributors and Supporters

Major Funders

British Columbia Housing Management Commission
 Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
 Provincial Health Services
 Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
 Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
 Vancouver Coastal Health
 BC Community Gaming Grant
 The Law Foundation of BC
 City of Richmond

Businesses, Foundation and Community Groups

Compass Church
 Dynamix Agitators Inc.
 Laureate Gamma
 Preceptor Gamma Theta
 Provincial Employees Community Services Fund
 Richmond Secondary School
 Shoppers Drug Mart
 Steveston Ladies Auxiliary
 Fairmont Vancouver Airport Hotel
 Gulf & Fraser
 Women's Shelters Canada
 Canadian Women Foundation
 Rotary Club of Richmond
 Kwantlen Polytechnic University
 Gilmore Park United Church
 Lulu Island Winery
 Air North

Thank you to our volunteers

At Chimo Community Services, our volunteers are the heartbeat of our organization. Their selfless dedication, time, and compassion make a profound difference in the lives of those we serve. Everyday, our volunteers help build a stronger, more supportive community, and we are incredibly grateful for their commitment.

Thank you for bringing hope, care and connection to those who need it most. Your contributions do not go unnoticed, and we celebrate each of you for the unique gifts you bring to our mission. Together, we continue to make an impact, and we couldn't do it without you!

"Years ago, I walked into the Chimo office to interview on being a crisis line responder. It was one of the warmest, most encouraging interviews I've had. I've worked with so many kind and caring people as a crisis line responder, crisis line coach, and now in outreach and advocacy. It's been a humbling experience and I realize through Chimo that people from all backgrounds and walks of life in Richmond do care."

118 active volunteers

Volunteers provided 5,013 hours of services across programs

"Volunteering at Chimo planted the first seeds of my interest in social work. Years later, I've now returned as a social work practicum student and I'm grateful to work with a team of dedicated volunteers and staff who truly care about the clients they serve. Chimo is a social service gem in the community."

Volunteer with Chimo!

Volunteering is a powerful way to make a difference in the world around you. When you offer your time and skills, you not only help others, but you also enrich your own life. Volunteering with Chimo is an incredible opportunity to connect with people, learn new things, and grow as an individual. Every act of kindness, no matter how small, contributes to a larger movement of compassion and hope.

Our volunteers are provided with extensive formal training and ongoing opportunities for development. To learn more, please contact volunteer@chimoservices.com

Contact Us

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