

# INVEST IN THEIR LIVES THROUGH DAN'S LEGACY



THE DAN'S LEGACY FOUNDATION

2018/2019

## ABOUT DAN'S LEGACY

Dan's Legacy is a non-profit organization that provides therapeutic counselling and life-skills intervention programs to youth affected by mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, sleeping and eating disorders and self-medicating issues, resulting from childhood trauma and abuse. We work one-on-one with our clients who are referred to us through a variety of channels.

The majority of our clients are youth with little to no family support systems and who have grown up primarily in foster-care and group homes, or who are homeless. They are at risk of "falling through the cracks" and have significant barriers in terms of accessing Health Authority mental health programs or private counsellors. Since they cannot go for help, we go to them.

With support from our donors and partners, the youth have a greater chance of succeeding in their educational, housing and recovery goals, avoiding life-long mental health issues, homelessness and the prospect of entrenched addiction.

Our qualified counsellors also work with private clients who are not eligible for any kind of government support, as well as in partnership with a number of established community-based organizations including Aunt Leah's Place, Kwikwetlem First Nation, Musqueam First Nation, Cwenengital Aboriginal Society, and Coast Mental Health's Culinary Skills Training Program. In 2019 we plan to grow these current partnerships, as well as develop new ones, to serve more than 200 at-risk youth in the Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley. To that end we have recruited and trained a team of counsellors who are ready to begin working with us once funding is secured.

*The opioid health crisis...could have been diverted if those now entrenched in their addictions had been offered interventions earlier in life.*

We believe the opioid health crisis that has caused such suffering and death within in our community could have been diverted if those now entrenched in their addictions had been offered these kinds of interventions earlier in life when, as youth, they experienced mental health issues and self-medicating behaviours due to trauma and abuse.

The need continues to grow and at Dan's Legacy we are committed to meeting that need.

We believe it's time to move beyond harm reduction and to direct funding and resources towards **Harm Prevention, specifically counselling and life-skills programs**, one of the most effective and sustainable solutions to the opioid health crisis. With these strategies implemented upstream, the need for harm reduction interventions will be greatly reduced.

## CLOSING GAPS IN SERVICE

Youth in Care, many of whom have been placed in multiple foster and group homes throughout their childhood, have been set up, by definition, to experience *attachment disorders*. These disorders are characterized by an inability to: trust others; engage in positive social interactions; and experience healthy psychological development. They have been exposed to trauma and abuse from birth parents (some of whom were struggling with mental health and addiction issues themselves), and/or inappropriate foster care providers. The stressed out or even violent environments in which they were born into or raised have also been identified as the precursors for Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD).

Government agencies, regional health authorities and local service providers have a tendency to work in silos and this is one of the primary reasons these high-risk youth end up “falling between the cracks”. Currently these youth cannot access therapy in any meaningful way. They do not have the skills or regulated lives to make appointments, show up on the correct date and time for those appointments, and then wait patiently in a waiting room to see the available counsellor provided by a Health Authority.

The reality of their lives is one of homelessness or at best “couch surfing”. For others it’s the threat of aging out of government care at the age of 19 when most supports are instantly revoked. The majority are dealing with mental health issues and are beginning to self-medicate for the pain with drugs or alcohol.

*We are closing the gaps in service from government agencies through the delivery of our specially developed programs.*

There are currently hundreds of such youth right on the edge of falling into full-blown addiction, involvement with gangs and criminal activity, risking overdose, or in desperation, attempting suicide.

They critically need therapeutic counselling and life-skills intervention, and it is to this extremely high-risk cohort that we are closing the gaps in service through the delivery of our specially developed programs.

We provide our services to those who find us by referral from friends and family or through our partnerships with other community-based organizations that offer training, housing, education, recovery or assessment. Our counselling and life-skills programming is holistic, based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) and Mindfulness principles. We balance psychological principals with proper diet and exercise and focus on the role that past trauma and abuse now plays in their dysfunctional lives. We work with these youth when, in their late teens or early twenties, they begin to struggle with depression, anxiety, eating and sleeping disorders, and self-medicating behaviour. When these youth cannot access counselling and life-skills support, they are at risk of developing serious and life-long mental health issues, chronic unemployment, homelessness, addiction and even suicide. The stakes could not be higher.

## OUR PARTNERSHIPS - CURRENT

To maximize our impact we work in partnership with a number of established community-based organizations in Metro Vancouver that offer training, housing, education, recovery or assessment.

Our community partners cover 50% of the counselling costs to our shared clients.



### AUNT LEAH'S PLACE

Aunt Leah's Place in New Westminister is a registered charity that assists young mothers and youth in foster care with supported housing. The organization has entered into a new partnership agreement with BC Housing that will greatly increase their capacity to offer assistance to youth in their *Support Link*, *Link* and *Thresholds* programs. Dan's Legacy has been invited to provide the mental health component to this expansion of their services, raising the total number of our clients at Aunt Leah's Place from 100 youth to 135.



### COAST MENTAL HEALTH – CULINARY SKILLS TRAINING PROGRAM

Since September, 2017 we have provided counselling support to the students enrolled in Coast Mental Health's Culinary Skills training program, helping to increase their ability to receive the necessary education and work experience needed to overcome barriers to employment. Each student with whom we worked graduated from the program. Our collaboration with Coast Mental Health has had measurable and positive outcomes, and we have recently entered into a new agreement to continue counselling services for the next two intakes.



### KWIKWETLEM FIRST NATION

We provide counselling and life-skills programs to the youth living both within and outside of their community.



### BROADWAY YOUTH RESOURCE CENTRE

We offer similar wrap-around services at BYRC as those we provide to Aunt Leah's Place in New Westminister: counselling, life-skills, an exercise program under the supervision of a certified fitness instructor, and a Femme Empowerment Workshop. We also help support clients with their Person's with Disability (PWD), Adult Youth Agreement (AYA) and post-secondary tuition applications to the Tuition Waiver Program with the BC Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training.

## CWENENGITEL ABORIGINAL SOCIETY

This society has operated a men's recovery house in Surrey for over twenty years. It's a place where Aboriginal men may live while addressing drug and alcohol addiction, and receive help to successfully reintegrate into the community. There is a strong focus on mental, physical, spiritual and emotional healing. Dan's Legacy counsellors work with the residents in the group home, and Elders from the society lead workshops on traditional cultural practices to the youth taking part in other Dan's Legacy programs.

## THE RICHER INITIATIVE

Dan's Legacy's Program Director currently participates in a Responsive Intersectoral Children's Health, Education and Research Initiative (RICHER) table at the Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre in East Vancouver. This program from Children's and Sunnyhill Hospitals refers youth to our therapists who they see as their client and can use our counselling program.

# OUR PARTNERSHIPS – IN DEVELOPMENT

In 2018-2019 we plan to expand our reach with the following organizations:

## EAST VAN DAN'S

We have identified a need in East Vancouver for specialized counselling services for youth with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), high functioning Autism/Asperger's, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), as well as youth affected trauma and poverty. After the success of our "Supported Program for Youth with FASD" pilot program in Surrey (2017-2018) we plan grow this program in 2019 to give these youth a secure and safe place to meet and bond, and then opt in to our counselling programs. This program will partner with various organizations currently working with these at-risk youth and will expand on the gains they have already made. Those organizations include the Ray-Cam Cooperative Centre, REACH Community Health Centre, Broadway Youth Resource Centre, RICHER Health and the Hip Hop Drop.



## MUSQUEAM INDIAN BAND

All of Dan's Legacy's therapists, two of whom are Indigenous, bring cultural and trauma-informed experience to their practice. We plan to sign an agreement with the Musqueam Indian Band to provide therapeutic counselling and life-skills programs to the Band's members.

## OUR PRIVATE CLIENT SERVICES

### GROWING OUR PRIVATE CLIENT SERVICES

As more youth and their families discover our unique programming, through word-of-mouth recommendations, the requests for our services is growing substantially. Dan's Legacy commits to providing its services to these youth and their families through our Counselling Bursary Program, sustained through the support of grants from foundations and government agencies. We provide a means test to each family to determine their financial situation, and some are able to cover a portion of our costs. However, many youth are without family support or the family has challenges that are overwhelming, and depend entirely on our bursaries to access our programming. Currently we serve approximately 15 youth and have about 30 more clients waiting to access our services.

*Our Harm Prevention strategies reduce the likelihood of addiction and homelessness later in life.*

Our **Harm Prevention** strategies reduce the likelihood of addiction and homelessness later in life, as well as minimize the unprecedented cost to society in terms of the impact on communities, families and individual lives lost to the opioid health crisis.

## OUR CLIENTS

Our clients are youth aged 15 – 25 who struggle with depression, anxiety, eating and sleeping disorders, and addiction issues due to past trauma and abuse. In an attempt to self-medicate and suppress the inner pain resulting from this trauma, they are at significant risk of overdose, self-harm, homelessness and suicide. Some of the youth need to reconnect with families, while others have no family support and will soon “age out” of the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD) services.



Most of the youth are currently taking part in programming provided by our partners that assists with: housing, recovery, assessment, and the development of educational and/or employment goals. We work with youth who are ready and willing to put in the effort needed and who will commit to staying involved for the four-month period.

We offer Mindfulness Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (MCBT), Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT), diet and exercise life-skills throughout the four-month intervention. We work with the youth to identify skill deficits and then help them acquire the skills they need to meet their immediate goals, as well as achieve long-term success. We also provide counselling and life-skills intervention to private clients, as many are referred by MCFD, Probation Services, referral by friends helped by the program, or by family who find us through recommendations from friends.

We also work with families so that parents and siblings have the ability to reinforce and support the learning our clients receive in their sessions.

Without intervention, our clients are at risk of facing homelessness and life-long mental health issues. Because the focus of our counselling and life-skills programs is based on **Harm Prevention**, the threat of living with entrenched addictions is significantly reduced.

## OUR CLIENTS

### INTERVENTION TIMELINES, COSTS AND OUTCOMES

An average intervention of four months (16 weekly sessions) costs \$1,00.00 per client or \$62.50 per session. Our partners cover 50% of these costs and we cover the difference through our fundraising efforts. Individuals and families who have the financial means are encouraged to pay for private counselling, and we provide a Means Test to determine their level of ability.

<b>25% Pre-commitment stage</b>	<b>50% Success with 4-month intervention</b>	<b>25% Need more support</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These clients are not yet ready to commit to the work involved; we maintain contact until such time as they request to participate in our programs.</li> <li>• Either the client or the counsellor decides that they need more time before engaging.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• These clients achieve success learning to reduce self-medicating behaviour and reach their educational, housing and recovery goals after completing the 4-month program (16 sessions)</li> <li>• We provide follow-up maintenance sessions for up to two years.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Due to the severity of the abuse and trauma experienced by these clients, longer-term counselling and support are necessary to help them achieve the insight and empowerment necessary to overcome their issues.</li> </ul>

*\*(Costs are approximate and based on programming results to date with 100 clients in 2016).*

Costs of \$1,000 per client vary depending on the clients' needs as most do well within the four-month intervention, but some need much more time to gain insight into the significant trauma and abuse they suffered earlier in their lives.

## SUCCESS STORIES

### “JASON”, AGE 20

Jason was raised in a broken home by a single mom who struggled with depression. Bullied at school for being overweight, he turned to drugs to suppress the psychological pain of his experiences and was soon addicted to methamphetamine (meth). Subsequent panic attacks, anxiety, depression and meth psychosis spiraled out of control and he was hospitalized for some time. Jason entered our program in 2016 and, through counselling and life-skills support, has learned to self-regulate and manage his mental health challenges. He has not only gained control of his life, but is now focused on paying it forward to others in need. Jason is involved in a youth leadership program and shares his experiences, knowledge and skills with new clients to the program, being the first to greet the newcomers and helping them to prepare for counselling sessions.

### “JANE”, AGE 25

Born addicted to heroin and methamphetamines, Jane was removed from her mother’s care and placed into a number of foster homes. For three years she suffered abuse and was subsequently returned to her mother, where she was raised in a meth lab. When her mother needed precursors for making drugs, she sold her daughter for sex. At the age of 14 Jane, now addicted to meth herself, escaped to the streets where she continued to work in the sex trade. Deciding at the age of 20 that she wanted to take back her life, Jane entered detox and a recovery program. Upon release, she enrolled in our treatment program which she attends regularly. She has avoided relapse for the past six months and has maintained her own home successfully.

### “JOSH”, AGE 22

Josh experienced almost every category of childhood trauma that there is. His mother was a heroin addict and worked the streets; Josh cared for her at home and also watched out for her while she worked by recording the Johns’ license numbers. He spent many years parenting a dysfunctional parent, and developed negative coping strategies to manage the inner pain, depression and lack of adult guidance that defined his life. But Josh is a gifted musician, and has an innate ability to care for those around him. He flourished in therapy and learned how to use various tools to help him manage his problems in a healthy and positive way, rather than through self-medication. Josh now has his own band and works full-time.

## DAN'S LEGACY BACKGROUNDER

Dan's Legacy was founded in memory of a young man who, after surviving sexual abuse as a teenager, self-medicated with hard drugs in an attempt to numb the psychological pain of the traumatic experience. He received help from substance abuse recovery programs on two occasions, but did not have access to essential one-to-one therapy. Tragically, Dan relapsed, overdosed and died. He was 19.

In 2006, the Foundation became a federally registered Canadian charity. For the first seven years it operated as a family foundation, raising funds to distribute to other non-profit organizations providing recovery and training programs for at-risk youth. In January, 2014 the Foundation's board decided to provide its own signature therapeutic programs under the operating name of **Dan's Legacy**, and in September, 2017 the society rebranded itself as the Dan's Legacy Foundation.



Dan

August 31, 1986 – August 27, 2006

## THE LEADERSHIP TEAM



### **BARBARA COATES – EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Barbara Coates accepted the position of Executive Director at Dan’s Legacy in September, 2016, after four years with the Marketing and Communications team at Variety - The Children’s Charity of BC. Barbara brings a 33-year background in broadcasting and communications to her role, as well as marketing, public relations and fundraising for clients in the health, not-for-profit and government sectors. She is an active and long-time volunteer, serving on numerous business, sports, educational, charitable and government committees and boards in her community of Delta. Barbara is passionate about children’s and mental health issues, and is a past Director with the Canadian Mental Health Association (Delta). She volunteers to mentor young PR professionals through the Canadian Public Relations Society (CPRS) Vancouver, is a Director on the Board of the CBC 20 Year Association, Co-Chair of the Delta Chamber of Commerce Communications Committee, and member of the Surrey Board of Trade Social Policy Committee. Barbara holds a Diploma in Broadcast Communications and a Certificate in Marketing Management/Public Relations (Distinction) from BCIT.



### **TOM LITTLEWOOD - PROGRAM DIRECTOR**

Tom Littlewood first served as a consultant with Dan’s Legacy, and after working with the foundation’s board for four months, was hired as the Program Director and Senior Counsellor. Tom graduated from Simon Fraser University with B.A. in Psychology in 1985. Over the next six years he completed his Masters in Psychology as well as two years of specialized counselling programs in various universities in Canada and the USA. He developed one of the first diversion programs for at-risk youth while working as a police counsellor, and established the original Affinity Card campaign as the founding Executive Director for the Selkirk College Foundation. Tom also founded and served as the Executive Director for the Sanctuary Foundation which for fifteen years provided work and life skills programs, counselling and first jobs for thousands of at-risk youth in the Lower Mainland. Through the Sanctuary Foundation Tom also worked with the Cuban Ministry of Education, setting up a bike mechanics apprenticeship program for at-risk Cuban youth. Tom has also worked as a community counsellor for a First Nation community and as a family support worker and counsellor for an alternative high school in Langley. For the last fifteen years he has managed and volunteered at a local food cooperative, personally attending to the pick-up and delivery of surplus food donated by a national grocery chain. Tom’s work ensures that over 500 at-risk youth, seniors, and low-income residents receive healthy and nutritious food on a weekly basis, valued at close to \$1 million per year.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS - EXECUTIVE

### **Guyle Clark – President**

Guyle grew up in Burnaby where he attended Burnaby North Secondary and later Simon Fraser University. Guyle attended law school at the University of British Columbia, articulated at a boutique personal injury law firm in Richmond, moved to a well-established general practice in Vancouver, and then worked for a downtown plaintiff only personal injury practice. Now, as a partner at Clark Woods LLP, Guyle focuses exclusively on personal injury law. When he is not working, Guyle can be found hanging out with his wonderful wife Michelle Lane, whacking golf balls around the Vancouver Golf Club, chasing hockey pucks around 8 Rinks or the Burnaby Winter Club and tossing bowling balls down the alley at Old Orchard Lanes. After spending two years on Burnaby's Board of Variance, Guyle was recently appointed to the Burnaby's Parks, Recreation & Culture Commission by Mayor Derek Corrigan.

### **Peter Buxton, Q.C. – Vice-President**

Peter is a trial lawyer and the managing partner at Panorama Legal LLP. He graduated from UBC in 1980 and has practiced law in BC since that time. He has served as a Director of Baseball Canada and the President of Baseball BC, the BC Minor Baseball Association and North Delta Baseball. Peter was a Parks and Recreation Commissioner in Delta for 13 years and currently sits on the Delta Police Board and the Fraser Patient Care Quality Review Board. He lives in North Delta with his wife of 40 years, together with whom has raised three sons who currently live in the Lower Mainland.

### **Gregg Smith CPA, CA – Treasurer**

After graduation from Simon Fraser University in 1971 with a Bachelor of Arts in accounting, Gregg joined Wolrige Mahon Chartered Accountants where he worked until his retirement at the end of 2014. During that time Gregg became a senior partner in the assurance group, professional standards group and chaired the real estate group but also worked with numerous not for profit clients and assisted in the set-up of a number of private charitable foundations. It was this interest that led him to be involved with the start-up of the Foundation and his continued role as Secretary/Treasurer of Dan's Legacy.

### **Sierra Van Straaten – Secretary**

Sierra experienced child-hood trauma after being diagnosed with cancer at a young age. She battled depression and anxiety throughout her teens, which resulted in self-medication through drug use. Sierra became addicted to crystal meth, but it was only after a couple of suicide attempts and admittance to a hospital psychiatric ward did she finally receive a diagnosis for depression, anxiety, borderline personality disorder and polysubstance use disorder. Sierra is now on doctor-prescribed medication that has helped her to stabilize, and she believes that had she received counselling earlier in her teen years she would have been able to avoid abusive relationships and the vicious cycle of addiction. Sierra is grateful for everything she has been through as she believes it is helping her to appreciate her clean, happy life today. She is dedicated to working every day to end the stigma associated with mental health and addictions issues, as she believes the more we talk about it, the more we realize most people suffer from it, and that people don't have to suffer in silence.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS - DIRECTORS

### **Lorna Van Straaten – Director**

Lorna has a long and varied career in not-for-profit and business management. She served as an Administrator with the Whistler Community Services Society (WCSS) for five years, and later as the organization's Executive Director for a further five years. She also provided her considerable experience in non-profit governance as the Squamish Food Bank President and Director on the Board of the Squamish Helping Hands Society. Lorna is currently a Director with the Delta Chamber of Commerce, Director of Business Development for Community Clicks Media Group and owner of Experience Delta Communications.

### **Darin Froese – Director**

Darin has been working in the social services and housing field since 2001 at a senior management level, and is currently the CEO of the New Vista Society. His experience includes Executive Director positions at BC Housing and Income Assistance managing portfolios in annual funding of over \$400M. Darin attended Simon Fraser University and holds a Bachelor of Business degree (Finance). He has also attended the Executive Program in Public Sector Leadership at Royal Roads University, and has been involved in a number of community based task forces and projects. He has been a Director/Treasurer on three non-profit boards. Darin resides in Maple Ridge with his wife and two daughters, and dog.

## COUNSELLING STAFF

### **Danilo Jose (DJ) Villacrusis, MACP**

Mr. Villacrusis has a Master's degree in counselling psychology from Yorkville University and has worked as a program director and substance abuse counsellor with at-risk youth for the past 9 years.

### **Jayne Simpson, MSW-ITR**

Ms. Simpson has a Masters of Social Work – Indigenous Trauma and Resiliency from the University of Toronto and has experience as a Wraparound Counsellor with the Broadway Youth Resource Centre working with youth using DMT, CBT, experiential exercises, emotional regulation strategies, and narrative therapies.

### **Kathryn Priest-Peries, M.S.W., Ph.D.(cand.), R.C.C., R.S.W,**

Ms. Priest-Peries has a Masters of Social Work from UBC and is currently working towards her PhD in Cognitive Neuro-psychology with Capella University in Minneapolis, Minnesota. She has over 23 years' experience working as a therapist in private practice, as well as with the BC Ministry for Children and Family Development and with Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services. Her dissertation research is The Assessment and Treatment of Autism using Brain-Wave Bio-Feedback.

### **Kent Apa'Tsti Danielson, M.S.W., R.S.W.**

Mr. Danielson has a Masters of Social Work from Walla Walla University, and has worked for 23 years in clinical, community-based child and youth mental health. He has recently retired from the BC Ministry for Children and Family Development. The last seven years was focused on using cultural and land-based treatment to the complexity of intergenerational trauma and disconnection with suicidal Aboriginal youth. His practice is to integrate culture connection and ceremony over psychotropic medication where possible. Mr. Danielson uses photography as a tool in mindfulness and cultural connection. He focuses on supporting youth who have aged out of care with ongoing support and adoption of community.

## CONTACT US

Dan's Legacy Foundation

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