

Newsletter

February 2026 Edition - A Season of Growth at Sanctuary

AT THE HELM OF SANCTUARY

At a busy and growing youth drop-in Centre like Sanctuary, there is never a dull moment, and Darin often finds himself wearing many hats.

On any given day, you might see him teaching a youth how to box or play pool, sharing a meal, jumping into a competitive game of UNO, washing dishes, or fixing something that needs attention. These hands-on moments have helped shape the warm, relational culture Sanctuary is known for.

At the same time, Darin carries the broader responsibilities of serving as Executive Director—overseeing operations, stewarding finances, building partnerships, and representing Sanctuary in the community. He participates in initiatives such as the monthly Collaboration to Prevent Youth Homelessness Committee and the Downtown Christian Ministry Coalition, ensuring Sanctuary has a voice at key tables and that our youth remain central in important regional conversations.

Fundraising is also a significant part of his leadership, including events like Ride for Refuge, the 2025 Hearts for Hope Gala, and the upcoming Dessert Night this April. As Sanctuary continues to grow, Darin's vision is to see a strong staff team increasingly lead the day-to-day operations of the Centre, creating space for him to focus more fully on his executive role—strengthening partnerships, developing long-term strategy, and securing sustainable funding for the future.



It's encouraging to see how many people in our community know Darin and the work of Sanctuary—a testament to years of faithful relationship-building and genuine care for the youth we serve.

“AN OUNCE OF PREVENTION IS WORTH A POUND OF CURE”

Darin is part of a regional Coalition to Prevent Youth Homelessness. At a recent meeting, a university research group shared a powerful reminder:

The average cost to keep someone homeless in Canada is **\$75,399** per year, when factoring in emergency room visits, court involvement, and other associated costs.

Investing in prevention and supportive community spaces like Sanctuary is not only compassionate—it is wise.

🏈 SUPER BOWL EXTRAVAGANZA

Over 26 youth joined us for an unforgettable evening of cheering and celebrating as our southern west coast team, the Seattle Seahawks, took the win!

The room was full of energy from start to finish. Nachos, chicken strips, fries, and ice cream sundaes made up the ultimate football feast. Youth guessed the winner ahead of time and even played their own indoor football game throughout the evening.

It was a fun, high-energy night where laughter was loud and community was strong.



GROWTH AT SANCTUARY

- January 2025: 273 youth attended the centre
- January 2026: 385 youth attended
- Increase: 44%



We are incredibly thankful for the opportunity to care for and invest in more vulnerable youth. At the same time, this steady growth brings increased program costs—food, bus tickets, activities, and supplies all rise alongside attendance.

If you would like to help us meet these growing needs, we invite you to visit our website or contact us directly. Your support makes a tangible difference.

YOUTH SPOTLIGHT – CORRINA MCINNES

Corrina McInnes is an 18-year-old high school student on track to graduate this year while already taking meaningful steps toward her future.

In addition to completing her high school studies, she is currently enrolled at Camosun College in a Sports Management course and will enter the full Sports Management program this coming September. Corrina stays active by going to the gym and spending time with friends, and she enjoys playing softball with Andrew, one of Sanctuary’s volunteers.

She has been attending Sanctuary for about a year and a half and deeply values the welcoming environment, the opportunity to meet new friends (even when she’s not actively looking to), and the consistent support provided by staff.

Sanctuary has organized memorable outings such as paintball and ice skating—experiences she especially enjoyed—along with many other activities that bring youth together.

Most importantly, Corrina shares that Sanctuary has had a positive impact on her life by always being there to listen and offer support—whether she’s facing challenges at the centre or navigating situations at home. The guidance and encouragement she receives here continue to make a difference.

~ Written by Corrina



WELCOME TO OUR NEW BOARD MEMBER

We are excited to welcome Brad Yeo as a new Board member for Sanctuary.

Brad has been a well-loved volunteer among the youth for a number of years, and we are thrilled to have him now serve at the board level. His heart for young people and long-standing connection to Sanctuary make him a wonderful addition to our leadership team.

POP CHALLENGE



We hosted a fun and lighthearted Pop Challenge at Sanctuary with 11 different types of pop hidden from participants.

Each participant had to taste and guess the correct flavours without knowing what they were. Twenty youth and staff joined in, and in the end, Hendrix came out on top as the winner!

It was a simple activity—but sometimes the simple moments bring the biggest laughs and the best connection.

Calling All Cooks!

Sanctuary is always serving up healthy, tasty meals for our youth—and we need your help! If you, or a small group you’re part of—want to whip up a meal for our centre once a month, we’d love to hear from you. Contact Tracy: tracy@sanctuaryyouth.org



sanctuary youth centre

IMAGINING A FUTURE WHERE ALL YOUTH LEAD HEALTHY AND FULFILLING LIVES