

2024-25

ANNUAL REPORT



McLaren Housing
Society of British Columbia



mclarenhousing.org

McLaren Housing Society is privileged to work on the unceded ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) and sə́lilwətaʔɬ (Tsleil-Waututh) people and honoured that our work extends to surrounding lands of diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

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Greetings from the Leadership Team at McLaren Housing Society



Mike Hoche,
Board President
McLaren Housing Society



Ilm Kassam,
Executive Director
McLaren Housing Society

As we begin the 2024–2025 year, we extend our deepest gratitude to our dedicated staff, tireless volunteers, and generous supporters. Your unwavering commitment continues to sustain our mission to support individuals living with HIV/AIDS in accessing safe, stable housing and essential support. Together, we are building a healthier, more inclusive community.

We are proud to share this year’s Annual Report, which reflects on the accomplishments and challenges of the 2023–2024 year and outlines the bold steps we are taking to meet the future with compassion, innovation, and resilience.

2024–2025 Highlights and Accomplishments

Strategic Plan

Our Strategic Plan, developed in collaboration with our Board and staff, provides a clear and ambitious roadmap to guide McLaren’s growth and impact over the next four years. At its heart is a commitment to health, dignity, housing security, and community inclusion for people living with HIV/AIDS.

City of Vancouver Grant and Aging Strategy

In 2024, McLaren received a community grant from the City of Vancouver to partner with Happy Cities in developing a bold new strategy to support our aging residents. Most of our residents are over 50 and face increasing needs related to health, mobility, and affordability. From our resident surveys, we now have a comprehensive vision for enabling residents to age in place with dignity and safety. The plan outlines key initiatives. Securing operational funding to expand staffing and services and obtaining capital funding to retrofit Helmcken House for accessibility and long-term viability aligns with our strategic plan. This work positions McLaren as a leader in developing innovative housing solutions for older adults living with HIV/AIDS.

Housing and Supports

Stable housing remains central to McLaren’s mission. With over 300 individuals housed, we continue to prioritize safe, affordable, and appropriate housing, supported by wraparound services that respond to the evolving needs of our residents.

Service Enhancements

In response to resident feedback and emerging needs, we expanded our staffing and enhanced our programming and support services, increasing access to care and improving the quality of life. These improvements are part of our broader commitment to resident well-being and health equity.

Community Engagement

We continued to foster connection through resident activities, peer programs, and community events. These initiatives build social support networks, reduce isolation, and strengthen community resilience.

Sector-Wide Challenges and Emerging Realities

While we have much to celebrate, we are also navigating a challenging and rapidly changing landscape:

Aging with HIV/AIDS

Residents are living longer, and with that comes an increasing need for physical, cognitive, and emotional support. Meeting these demands requires aging-specific services, infrastructure upgrades, and long-term planning.

Funding Cuts and Policy Shifts

Social programs across the country are facing funding reductions. Additionally, shifting political priorities and changing government policies are creating uncertainty in the housing and healthcare sectors, including within supportive housing models.

Cost of Living

Inflation and rising costs for food, transportation, and basic goods are disproportionately affecting our residents, many of whom live on fixed incomes.

Complex Needs on the Rise

Residents are presenting with increasingly complex health and support needs—mental health concerns, substance misuse, chronic conditions—placing more pressure on housing and care systems that are already stretched thin.

National Context

Canada faces systemic pressures, including a worsening housing crisis, strained healthcare systems, and deepening divides around equity, national unity, and freedom of expression. These broader social issues have a direct and growing impact on our residents and our work.

Looking Ahead: 2025–2026

This coming year, McLaren will focus on transforming our housing and support services to meet current and future needs.

We will:

- Begin implementation of our aging-in-place strategy in collaboration with BC Housing and other key partners
- Advocate for renewed and increased funding to expand services and invest in critical infrastructure
- Advance our commitment to equity and inclusion within the housing sector
- Explore new housing partnerships and development opportunities
- Expand peer-led programs and resident engagement to empower our community

Our core values: **integrity, equity, compassion, inclusion, and innovation**, continue to guide us as we navigate a complex environment and work to ensure that every person living with HIV/AIDS has access to safe housing, comprehensive care, and a sense of belonging.

Thank you for your continued support, advocacy, and belief in our mission. With your partnership, we are confident in our ability to meet this moment and continue building a stronger, healthier future together.

With gratitude,
The Leadership Team
McLaren Housing Society of BC



Brock David Tebbutt, CM, OBC, RCA (Joe Average)

October 10, 1957 – December 24, 2024

Joe Average: A Legacy of Art and Advocacy

Few names resonated as deeply in Vancouver's vibrant art scene as Joe Average. Renowned for his bold colours, whimsical figures, and joyful compositions, Joe was far more than a creative force—he was a philanthropist, an advocate, and a beacon of hope for people living with HIV/AIDS. His passing on Christmas Eve 2024 marked the end of an era, but his extraordinary legacy continues to shine through his art and the countless lives he touched.

At McLaren Housing Society, Joe was more than an artist. He was a steadfast champion whose generosity and activism left an indelible mark on our mission. His work not only raised awareness but also critical funds, ensuring that people living with HIV/AIDS had access to stable housing, essential services, and the dignity everyone deserves. Joe's unwavering dedication to MHS and the broader HIV/AIDS community exemplifies the transformative power of art as a vehicle for social change.

The Art of Resilience

Joe Average's journey as an artist and advocate began in the 1980s following

his HIV diagnosis. Rather than allowing this diagnosis to define him negatively, he made the profound decision to dedicate himself fully to art. His style, characterized by vibrant colour, playful imagery, and emotionally accessible themes, quickly became iconic in Vancouver's cultural landscape. His work celebrated resilience, love, and inclusivity. Values that resonated across generations and communities.

As Joe's profile grew, he used his platform to uplift others. He donated artwork for fundraising events and lent his name and creative energy to awareness campaigns, always emphasizing the importance of housing as a foundation for health and stability. His generosity helped ensure McLaren Housing could continue to provide safe, supportive homes to those who needed them most.

A Deeply Personal Commitment

Joe's connection to McLaren Housing Society wasn't just philanthropic but profoundly personal. He understood firsthand the importance of stable housing for people living with HIV/AIDS. To him, a home meant more than shelter; it provided safety, health, and a sense of belonging.

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The 2019 Royal Canadian Mint limited edition ten-dollar coin commemorating the 50th anniversary of the decriminalization of homosexuality in Canada.

Throughout his life, Joe lent his distinctive vision to many MHS initiatives. Most recently, he selected McLaren as the beneficiary of proceeds from the John Fluevog 2024 Pride Pin. This final gift was a powerful expression of his ongoing commitment to our cause. Joe never hesitated to give through his art, presence, and heart.

**Beyond the Canvas:
A Voice for Change**

Joe’s advocacy extended far beyond McLaren Housing. He collaborated with numerous organizations, including A Loving Spoonful, the Dr. Peter Centre, Ribbon Community (formerly AIDS Vancouver), Vancouver Friends for Life



Joe Average, Thinking Cap/Life with HIV, 1997

Society, and many others. Through these partnerships, he helped shift public attitudes, break down stigma, and spark crucial conversations about compassion and support.

His iconic “One World, One Hope”, commissioned for the 11th International AIDS Conference in Vancouver in 1996, symbolized hope worldwide. “The stained-glass effect represents the fragility of all mankind in the face of AIDS,” he once said. “The heart at the centre represents love, which I have always believed is the only thing that can move us forward and truly end this epidemic.”

In 2021, Joe created a powerful sequel to that message with “One World, One Hope—40 Years Later,” commemorating

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four decades since the first reported cases of HIV/AIDS. Angelica Stirpe painted the mural based on Joe’s original design. It now graces our Helmcken House building, serving as a daily reminder of progress, perseverance, and the work still to be done.

Joe’s work humanized the epidemic, transforming it from an abstract crisis into a compelling call for action. Through public art installations, exhibitions, and charitable contributions, he consistently used his remarkable talent to advocate for a world where people living with HIV/AIDS are treated with dignity, respect, and compassion.

A Legacy That Lives On

Though Joe Average is no longer physically with us, his legacy remains deeply woven into the fabric of Vancouver’s artistic and philanthropic communities. His work continues to inspire, his advocacy lives on in the organizations he supported, and his belief in the power of giving serves as a powerful reminder of how one person’s commitment can create profound, lasting change.

For McLaren Housing Society, Joe’s impact will never be forgotten. His artwork continues to grace our walls, his generosity is reflected daily in the lives of those we serve, and his unwavering commitment to our mission will inspire future generations of advocates, artists, and supporters.



The 2024 John Fluevog Pride Pin, designed by Joe Average.

As we honour Joe Average’s memory, we celebrate his artistic genius and boundless compassion and kindness. His legacy reminds us that art can transform lives, that giving is a powerful act of resistance, and that a community built on love and mutual support will always prove stronger than the challenges it faces.

Joe Average’s light may have dimmed, but his colours will never fade. His art, advocacy, and profound belief in the power of community will continue to guide McLaren Housing Society as we carry forward his mission of hope, dignity, and support for all.



314
people housed



OUR IMPACT

Between April 1 2024 and March 31, 2025
McLaren Housing Society provided or assisted with:

Harm Reduction

1,745
smoking kits

19,515
syringes

3,903
injection kits

311
naloxone kits



498
grab
and go
grocery
shops

In March 2025 our waitlist had

1290
active applicants



3,091
meals served



Thank you to our **2024-25 Board of Directors**

Michael Hoche , President

Dale Buote, Vice-President/Treasurer

Rob O'Dea, Secretary

Willow King, Member at Large

Marissa Marr, Member at Large

Flavia Mpagi, Member at Large

Barbe Pickering, Member at Large

We would also like to thank the following board members for their service and commitment to MHS:

Lindsay Wyant, Treasurer, 2023 – 2025

Graeme Boyd, Member at Large, 2018 – 2024

Susan Levang, Member at Large, 2023 – 2024



Renewing Helmcken House: *Pioneering Solutions for Aging Communities*

In 2024, McLaren Housing Society received a community grant from the City of Vancouver to partner with Happy Cities to develop a bold new strategy for supporting our aging residents. The final summary outlines a vision for a comprehensive continuum of housing and care that enables residents to age in place with dignity, safety, and the right supports.

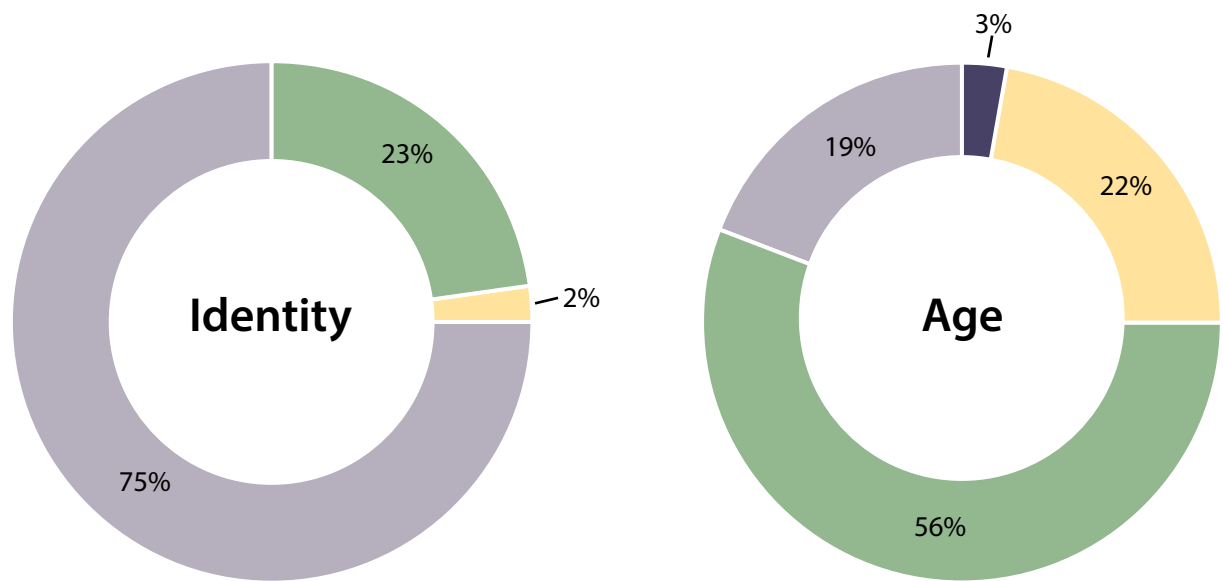
Most McLaren residents are over 50, with growing health, mobility, and affordability needs. While 95% report satisfaction with their housing, many are concerned about the future. Accessibility audits and resident surveys show an urgent need for physical upgrades, increased staffing, and expanded support services.

To realize this vision, McLaren must undertake two major shifts: secure new operational funding to increase staff and programming and obtain capital funding to retrofit Helmcken House for accessibility and safety.

The strategy includes 11 key initiatives, from enhancing peer-led programming and home care services to upgrading common areas and private units. With collaboration from BC Housing and other partners, McLaren is poised to lead in creating innovative housing models for older adults living with HIV/AIDS.

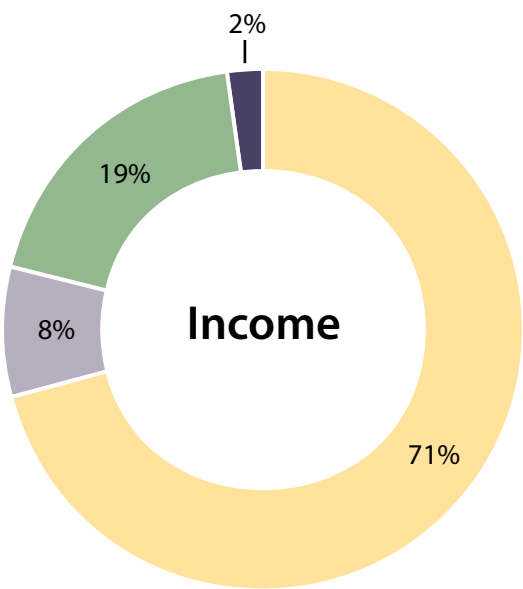
This plan represents our commitment to helping residents live with dignity, connection, and community as they age.

Demographics



- Male
- Female
- Gender Non-Conforming

- 25yrs - 34yrs
- 35yrs - 49yrs
- 50yrs - 64yrs
- 65yrs - 79yrs



- PWD*
 - PWD* / CPP-D*
 - CPP / OAS / GIS
 - Employed
- *PWD = Disability Assistance
*CPP-D = CPP Disability



Staff Spotlight: Mark



My name is Mark, and I am the maintenance manager for McLaren Housing.

I've been with McLaren Housing for nearly 10 years, and I will be retiring at the end of this year, at the age of 69. It's been a rewarding chapter in my life, and while I'll miss it, I feel it's the right time to step back and enjoy retirement.

Before joining McLaren, I had a long and varied career. I served in the military

for many years and retired from the armed forces 32 years ago. After that, I transitioned into the maintenance field, where I've worked ever since. Over the years, I've had the opportunity to work for several major companies, including Bentall, CBRE, and Colliers, always in maintenance roles that kept me hands-on and engaged.

A wide range of adventures and interests has complemented my work life. I'm a certified scuba diver and skydiver. I've also worked as a logger and spent time in the oil patch. I enjoy travelling, listening to music, working with computers, and tackling small building projects in my spare time.

Sports have always been a big part of my life. I played hockey with Team Army for 10 years and have always enjoyed staying active through soccer, badminton, volleyball, and various lawn sports.

Working at McLaren Housing has been a meaningful and fulfilling experience. I've had the pleasure of being part of a dedicated and compassionate team, and I've truly appreciated the supportive and respectful atmosphere here. The staff at McLaren are a great group of people, and I will definitely miss them when I go.

As I head into retirement, I look forward to more time for travel, hobbies, and maybe even a few new adventures. Thank you all for being part of this journey with me.

Resident Spotlight: Otto



My name is Otto, and I moved into Helmcken House on May 1st, 2014. At that time, I was at a critical point in my life. I had been battling a long addiction to crystal meth and was couch surfing at a friend's place that wasn't safe or supportive.

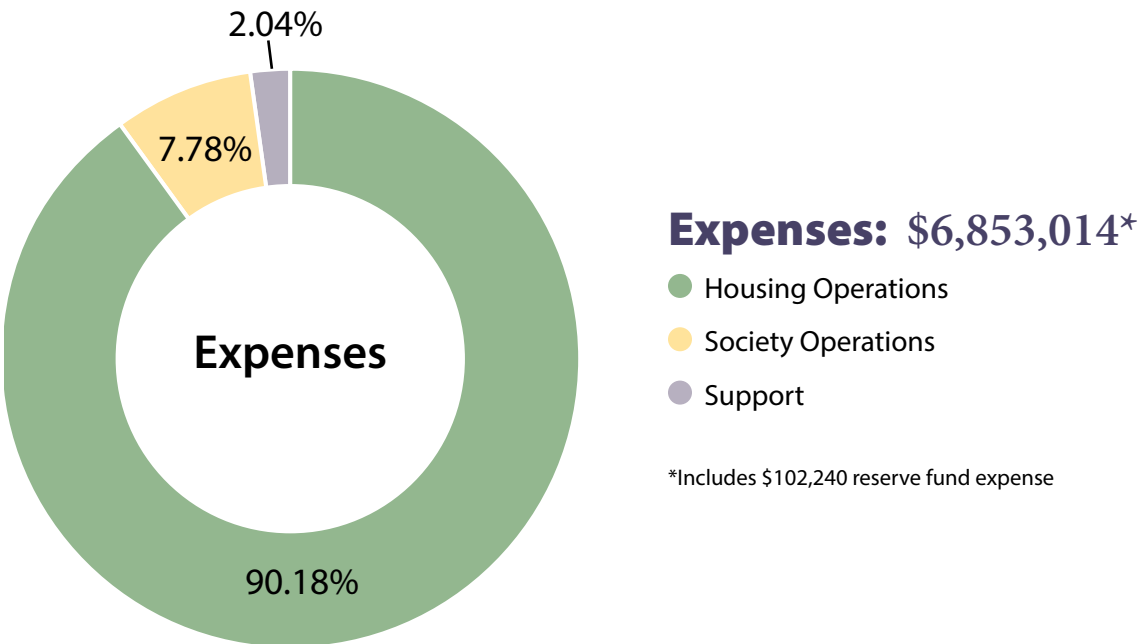
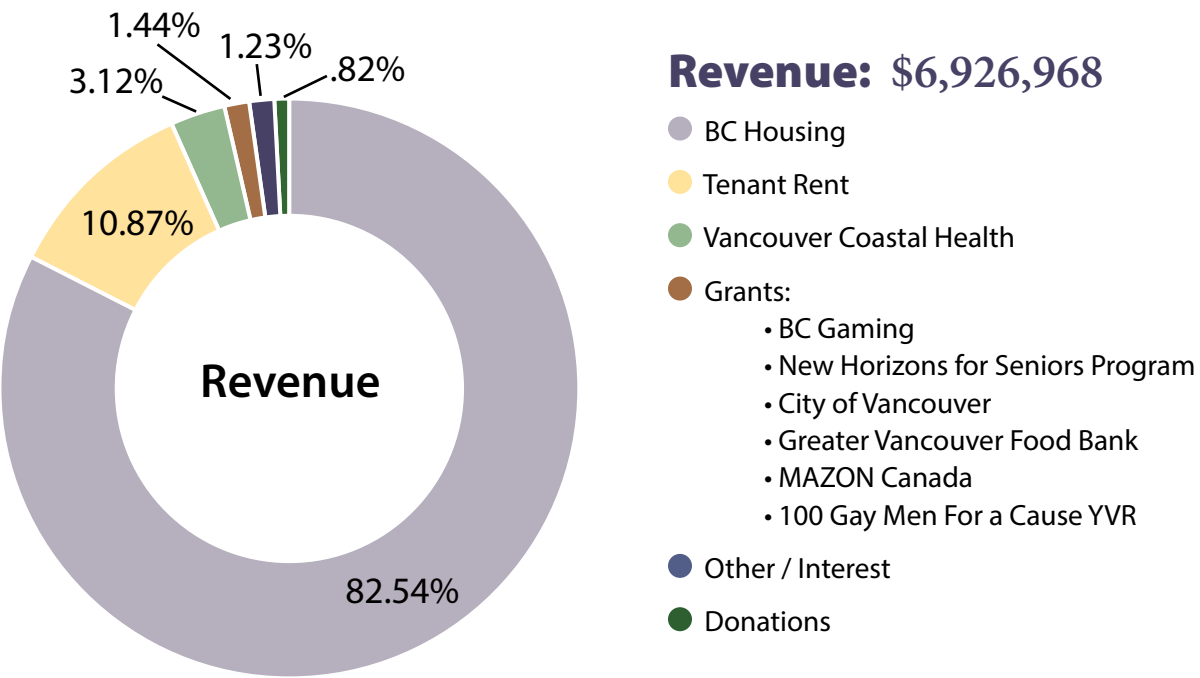
I still remember the day I got the call. A voice on the line asked, "Are you still in need of housing?" I could hardly believe it. I was overwhelmed, desperate for a safe place to call home. I answered, "Please bring me in. I need a home, desperately."

For the past eleven years, McLaren Housing Society has been incredible. They've stood by me through my struggles and celebrated with me in my successes. I'm so grateful for the safe, stable home they gave me, a place where I can truly be myself.

For the past 10 years, I've also been giving back as a Peer Navigator at Ribbon Community (formerly AIDS Vancouver), helping others find their footing, just like I once did.

Thank you, from the bottom of my heart.

Financial Snapshot 2024-2025



Thank you to our funders:

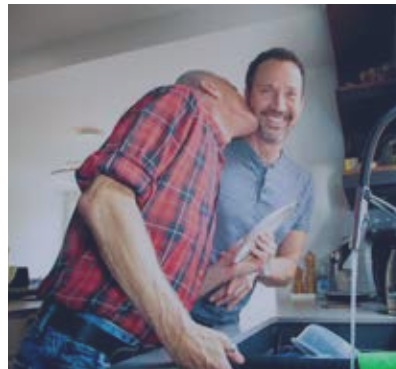


Thank you to our donors:





McLaren Housing
Society of British Columbia




Connect with us:


 facebook.com/McLarenHousingSociety/

 instagram.com/mclarenhousing/

Other ways to reach us:

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