

2025



#BeTheChangeYYC



ANNUAL REPORT

bethechangeyyc.org

Introduction

BeTheChangeYYC facilitates street-level homeless outreach every Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday across Calgary, focusing primarily on individuals who are rough sleeping in the downtown core.

Our organization is 90% volunteer-run, powered by a diverse team of professionals - including social workers, paramedics, addictions counsellors, nurses, health professionals, and individuals with lived experience of homelessness.

During outreach, volunteers distribute essential items such as food, water, clothing, hygiene kits, and harm reduction supplies to meet immediate needs. Beyond essentials, our teams provide referrals and system navigation support, helping individuals access shelter, housing, healthcare, and social services.

In addition to direct outreach, BeTheChangeYYC plays a growing role in advocacy and policy engagement, amplifying the voices of those who cannot access existing supports and working with decision-makers to address systemic barriers.

Our ultimate goal is simple yet powerful - to help end the cycles of homelessness through compassion, connection, and community action.



#BeTheChangeYYC

Organizational Mandate

Vision

Transforming Calgary into a leader in Canada to support all residents with equitable housing options within the continuum

Mission

Through volunteer power, we provide tangible necessities, systems navigation & advocacy to help end the cycles of homelessness

Values

Empowerment ♥

Empathy ♥

Compassion ♥

Collaboration ♥

Overview of 2024 to 2025

2024 proved to be another year of increasing the capacity and securing the future of our organization

Highlights of 2024 include:

- Organizational structure changes allowing for more resources to be allocated to our street outreach work.
- Expanded presence in the community through community events such as Sober Stampede, Calgary Pride Parade, Calgary Mitten Project, Lunch and Learns, and more.
- Reformation of Fundraising Committee
- Over 100% increase in training and education events for volunteers.
- Planned and produced Inter-Agency Training Event for Street Level Outreach Workers
- Most successful Holiday fundraising season to date with approximately \$30K raised from donations

Meet Team

BeTheChangeYYC



Chaz Smith

CEO/ Founder

Previously working with Calgary Homeless Foundation, and Avenue 15 Youth Shelter, Chaz brings both his lived experience of homelessness and professional experience fueling the creation of this non profit.

Tanya Clark

Vice President

Tanya Clark is our vice president with a 20-year background in project management. Her goal at BeTheChangeYYC is to be a facilitator and cheerleader for the organization and its mission.



Karen McPherson

Operations Director

For more than ten years, Karen has served as a dedicated community advocate, demonstrating a consistent ability to navigate complex systems in Canada. Karen works tirelessly to alleviate oppression experienced by marginalized communities.



Austin Deck, LPN, BHSc.

Health, Safety and Education Lead

Austin, a Licensed Practical Nurse, channels his passion for investing in people through his roles.

Equipped with a Certificate in Adult Education from Mount Royal University and a Bachelor's in Health Sciences with a focus on Public Health, he directs his efforts towards the development of volunteers within his community.



Meet the Team Leads



Olivia Levy, PCP

As a primary care paramedic, Olivia is deeply committed to providing care for unhoused individuals. Her dedication extends to ensuring that Calgary's vulnerable community receives the support and attention they need.

Ladan Yousef BHSc., LPN

Ladan Yousef, a licensed practical nurse, brings a wealth of experience in trauma and emergency medicine to her practice. Grounded in a steadfast commitment to empathy and compassion, she consistently prioritizes the well-being and comfort of her patients.



Cassie Clibett, PCP

Cassie Clibett, a primary care paramedic, possesses a keen organizational sense and a contagious enthusiasm for collaboration within her team. Her expertise in street-level interventions has significantly contributed to saving the lives of many vulnerable individuals.



Garth Paynter

An adept team lead, Garth boasts extensive experience in outreach spanning several years. His expertise lies in skillfully promoting safety measures for both volunteers and clients, ensuring a secure environment for all involved.

Yonatan Teklemariam

Social Work

Yonatan is a dedicated social worker who began his journey with BeTheChangeYYC as a practicum student and quickly developed a deep passion for the organization's mission. His commitment to supporting Calgary's most vulnerable has made him a driving force within the team. Yonatan plays a key role in organizing outreach efforts, ensuring resources are effectively distributed, and fostering meaningful connections with those experiencing homelessness. His dedication, compassion, and leadership continue to strengthen BeTheChangeYYC's impact in the community.



Kyla Ricard

Lived Experience Expert, Peer Navigator

A proud graduate of the CMHA School of Peer Support, Kyla brings both professional training and lived experience to her role as Peer Navigator. She offers invaluable insight into the pathways that foster connection and belonging among vulnerable Calgarians. Kyla's compassion and authenticity help bridge understanding between volunteers and the individuals we serve, ensuring that every interaction is rooted in empathy, dignity, and respect.



In 2024 to 2025 BeTheChangeYYC had:

19,860 Client Interactions with..

This was an increase
of approximately
24% when compared
to 2023



6189 Female
Individuals



13253 Male
Individuals



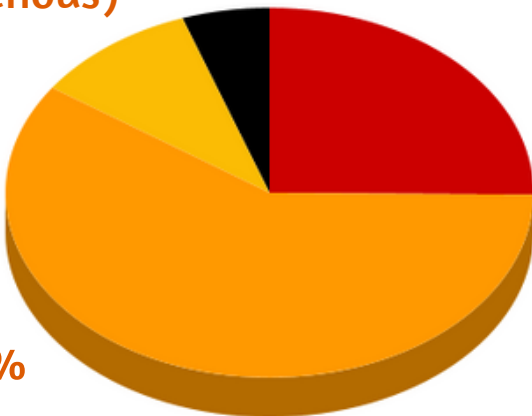
150 Gender Diverse
Individuals

10.0% Persons of
Color
(Excluding
Indigenous)

5.2% Persons of
unknown descent

25.1%
Caucasian
individuals

59.6%
Indigenous
Individuals

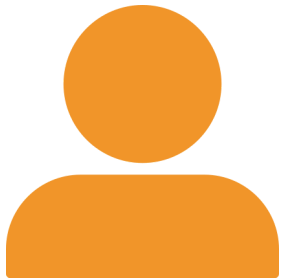


359 Youth
Contacts

1764 Rough
Sleepers

This was a 6% decrease in rough sleepers,
or those sleeping outdoors without shelter
when compared to 2023

BeTheChangeYYC Gave Referrals For.....

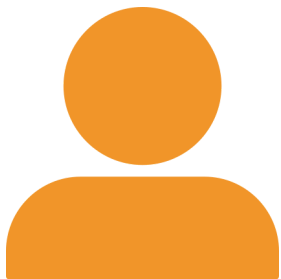
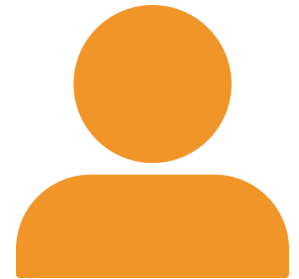


Housing to individuals that were unaware of the resource prior

1214 times

Emergency Food and Shelter to individuals who were unaware of the resource prior

1532 times



Medical/First Aid Administered

540 times

Our outreach team not only provides essential custodial care to our clients but also connects them with valuable city resources they may not be aware of

4014 total referrals

20% of all of our clients seen in 2024 received a referral to a program/service to help end their cycle of homelessness

Our Volunteers...

...braved the elements to serve those on the streets of Calgary every Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday and Sunday for more than 200 shifts.

200
shifts



Prepared and distributed
11,237 Sandwiches.

...gathered donations, cleaned, organized, planned, educated, advocated, administered and **much much more!** For a Total of more than 6,500 hours.

>6593
Volunteer
Hours



Photos in Action



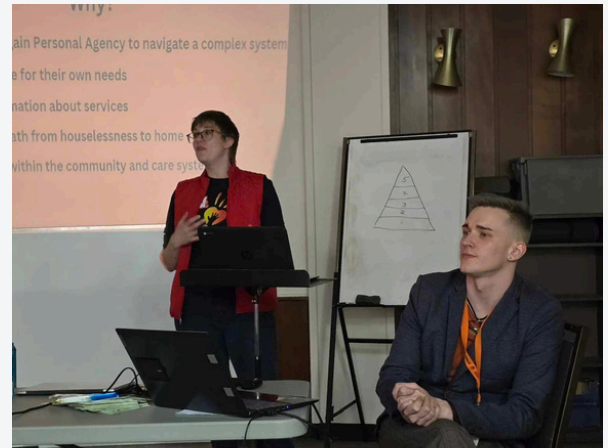
Our Team, Garth, Karen, and Austin at the 2024 Calgary Pride Parade



Our Joint Advocacy Education session with Calgary Ward 8 City Councillor Courtney Walcott



Team Lead, Ladan, and her team of volunteers preparing for an outreach shift



Our Team Lead, Kyla and Educator, Austin, providing training at a multi agency training event



Our Board Members at Volunteer Day at Cowboys Stampede Music Festival



Our outreach team providing quality connection points for vulnerable individuals

In 2024 BeTheChangeYYC Distributed.....

11237

Sandwiches

6816

**Bottles of
Water**

16279

**Other
Snacks**

5159

**Canned Goods
+ Noodles**

2167

**Other
Drinks**

3809

**Meal
Replacements**

1459

Electrolytes

5018

**Fruit
(fresh, canned,
fruit cups)**

2497

**Protein
Items**

4040

**Chips,
Crackers**

10589

**Baked
Goods**

\$150K

**Worth of Food
Items**

Hygiene Items

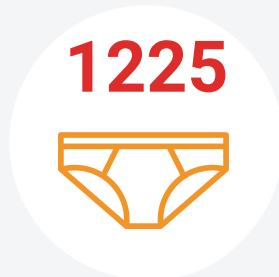
Our teams distribute hygiene items during each shift to lower the risk to physical well being and preserve the dignity of our clients.



Hygiene Kits



Wipes



Underwear



Tampon/Pad



Dental Kits



Sanitizer



Shaving Kits



Mini First Aid



Hygiene items have been known to increase the self confidence of clients as well as decrease the risk of conditions such as lice, scabies, dental problems, and athletes foot.

Harm Reduction

BeTheChangeYYC distributes harm reduction supplies to reduce the risks associated with substance use as well as the intersection between addiction and living unhoused.

In 2024 our teams distributed the following harm reduction supplies to clients:

Bubble Pipes:	8136
Straight Pipes:	1515
Naloxone Kits:	1242
Short Needle Kits:	302
Long Needle Kits:	256
Sharp Disposal Bins:	305
Sheets of Tin Foil:	2044
Condoms/Dental Dam:	785

We would not be able to accomplish this without the supplies and education provided through partnership with Safeworks and Alberta Health Services.



Public Safety & Emergency Weather Response

During winter the demand for warming spaces rises sharply and the risk of serious harm from extreme cold is at its highest.

BeTheChangeYYC plays a vital role in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness during these critical times. Through collaboration with the City of Calgary, community partners, and local agencies, our outreach teams provide direct resources, such as winter gear, warming supplies, and referrals to programming while maintaining a compassionate presence on the streets.

By being boots on the ground, BeTheChangeYYC helps bridge essential gaps in Calgary's Extreme Weather Response, ensuring that no one is left without care, warmth, or human connection when it's needed most. All while enhancing public safety and facilitating crime prevention strategies

- Through collaboration with the City of Calgary, BeTheChangeYYC **strengthened extreme weather response** capacity by extending life-saving resources directly to individuals on the street.
- Enhancing **public safety** on transit and in community by being "boots on the ground"
- Supported Central Outreach Hub to run an overnight warming station seeing **over 300 unique individuals in one night** alone.
- Providing over **2121 hand/foot warmers** in 2024-2025; reducing frostbite & amputations burden in Hospitals.
- More than **1000 pairs of Winter Mitts/Gloves**
- Over **2000 emergency blankets** provided
- Over **650 warm Winter Jackets**

Facilitated **emergency shelter access for over 1,000 individuals** through referrals, coordinated supports, and direct advocacy, ensuring that vulnerable Calgarians could find safety and warmth during periods of extreme weather.

We Distributed...

823
Backpacks or
Totes



907
Toques/ Hats



3355
Gloves/Mitts



655
Jackets/
Sweaters



3067
Pairs of
Socks



1906
Emergency
Blankets



106
Rain
Ponchos



109
Blankets

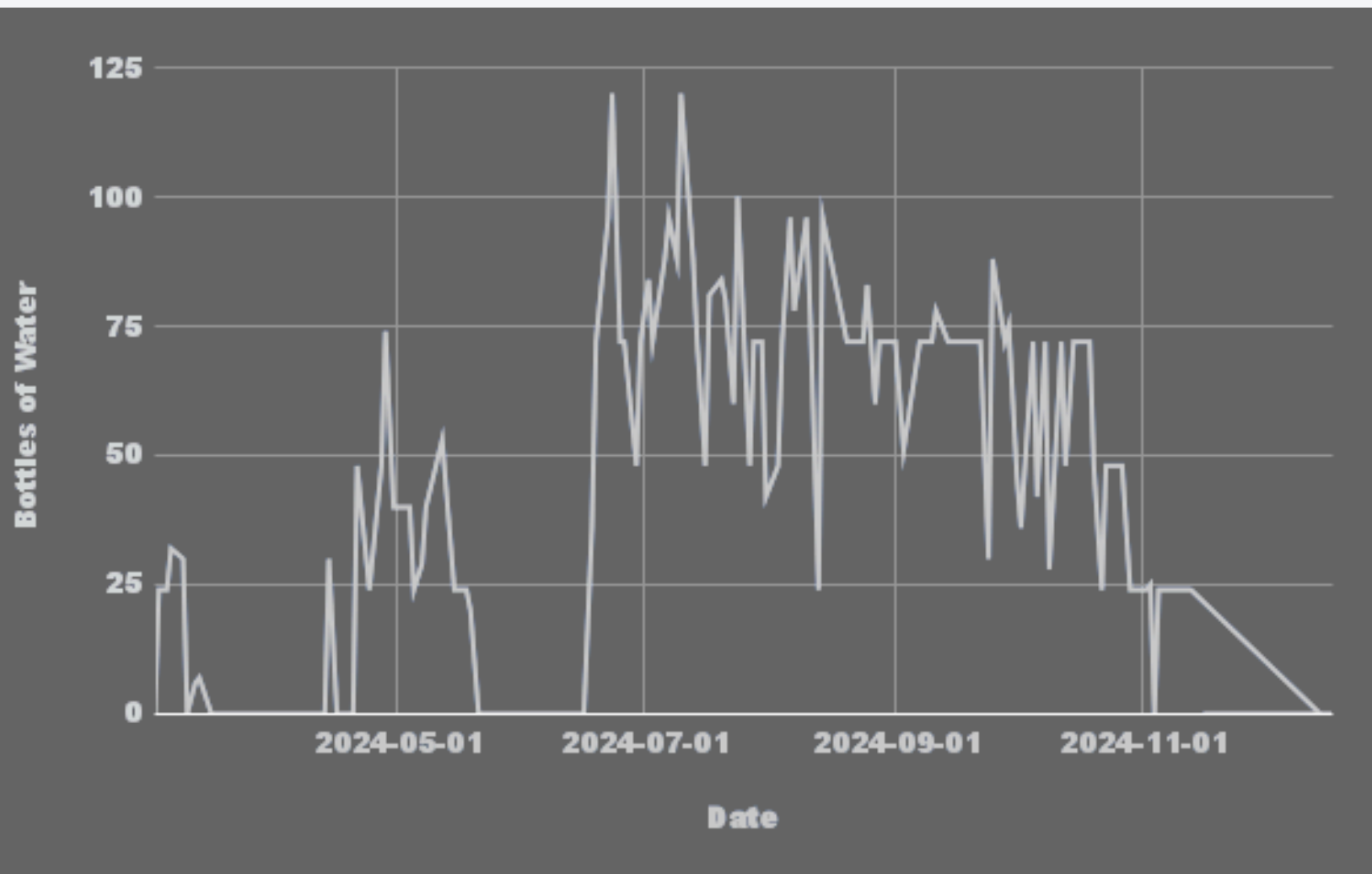


2121
Hand/Foot
Warmers



Summer 2024

- During the Summer months demand for bottled water doubles as more people sleep rough and temperatures rise.
- From April - August our teams handed out over 4000 bottles of water during outreach.



- We also distributed more than **480** bottles of sunscreen to clients during the summer.

TRAINING & EDUCATION

In 2024–2025, BeTheChangeYYC made significant strides in advancing education and training within the sector. Some of the year’s key highlights include:

Outreach Certification Seminars & Ongoing

BeTheChangeYYC planned and produced a inter agency training for street outreach workers which featured expertise from our Team Leads and Susan Brandt, from Street Level Consulting. Partners trained from Aaware, Bear Clan Patrol, Water Warriors, Sober Crew, Central Outreach Hub, to name a few.

Digitizing Outreach Training, Certification & Reporting

Thanks to a generous software donation from Pixel Tree’s “Hacking Homelessness” event, BeTheChangeYYC fully digitized our outreach training and certification process. The new platform includes training videos, outreach manuals, policies, and procedures, followed by a skill-testing Q&A. All results are manually reviewed before approving successful candidates, after which our volunteer scheduling system automatically integrates them for shifts. We also digitized our outreach reporting, enabling real-time data collection at the end of each shift – improving accuracy, efficiency, and our ability to respond quickly to emerging community needs.

Advocacy Sessions

In November 2024, BeTheChangeYYC was honoured to welcome City Councilor Courtney Walcott (Ward 8) as a guest speaker for a special session on Municipal Advocacy in Action. Councilor Walcott shared valuable guidance on how to effectively advocate for change at the city level, while also engaging in meaningful discussion about BeTheChangeYYC’s impact and the importance of community-based responses to homelessness. Throughout the year, these educational initiatives not only fostered greater understanding, but also inspired new partnerships, increased volunteer engagement, and enhanced public safety through knowledge.

Lunch and Learns

In demonstrating BeTheChangeYYC’s commitment to giving back, our team hosted a series of Lunch and Learn sessions with local businesses to share the message of supporting vulnerable Calgarians. These sessions helped increase public awareness, inspire community involvement, and strengthen collective safety through knowledge, empathy, and understanding.

Ongoing Training Sessions

Through collaboration with other grassroots organizations in the City of Calgary and utilizing our Educator, Nurse Austin Deck, Be The Change has been able to offer continuing education sessions to volunteers, politicians, partners, and community members.

AHASTI students

Every shift completed in 2024 included at least one EMR (Emergency Medical Responder) practicum student who, as a group, contributed **3474.5** hours of volunteer service.

Bow Valley College

Bow Valley College practicum students from social work and addiction studies programs completed over **300 practicum hours** at BeTheChangeYYC

University of Calgary Med Students

University of Calgary students have formed clubs to help support BeTheChangeYYC and raise funds for needed items like medical supplies. Shout out to the **U of C Medical Students' STITCH club**; Medical Students who will be our future Doctors

Community Support



Our Valued BeTheChangeYYC Volunteer **Raj Chana** Set up donation boxes throughout the city and rallied troops to donate hundreds of winter coats and clothing items.



BeTheChangeYYC received donations from a month long food and clothing drive held at **The Underwood Apartments**



We were privileged to be able to collaborate with **Mini Mall Storage** to run a clothing and food drive during December 2024

We distributed **Frost Bite Kits** and provided community education to spread awareness on the risks of frostbite for the 4th year in a row.



Our Team also held our annual Mitten Drive throughout the city in collaboration with **Global News & QR Radio**

Fundraising

FOR EVERY

BETHECHANGEYYC FOUND

\$1

DONATED

\$3.84

IN VALUE

In 2024, in the face of rising challenges within the not-for-profit sector, BeTheChangeYYC reaffirmed its commitment to fundraising by revitalizing our fundraising committee. In the time that the fundraising committee has been readjusted, BeTheChangeYYC has :

Raised over \$30K in the month of December:

Through a combination of initiatives during the month of December, BeTheChange was able to have its most successful holiday fundraising season to date.

Held our first 50/50 Raffle raising over \$5000

During our fundraising, our team utilized a 50/50 raffle in order to give back to one lucky individual during the holiday season. The lucky winner went home with over \$2500.

Held its most successful Clothing and Food Drives since we were founded.

With the generosity of Calgarians, BeTheChangeYYC was able to partner with businesses like The Underwood Apartments, Mini Mall Storage to ensure a sustainable inventory of supplies throughout the Winter.

None of this would be possible without the generosity of the YYC business community and YYC residents who have supported our work through donations or collaborations.

Thank you



A large word cloud of names, where the size of each name corresponds to the number of times that person has been interviewed on the radio. The names are arranged in a dense, overlapping pattern, with some names appearing much larger than others, indicating a higher frequency of interviews. The names are in various colors and orientations, creating a vibrant and complex visual.

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Thank you to our sponsors & partners in 2024

