



# **BeTheChangeYYC**

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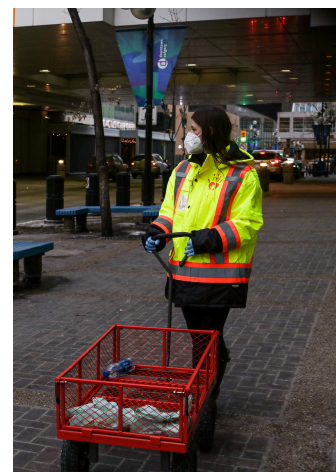
**2021 YEAR-END REPORT**

# BeTheChangeYYC

WRITTEN BY: HANNA WOODWARD, RSW

BeTheChangeYYC facilitates street outreach every Tuesday, Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday to provide tangible necessities to individuals experiencing homelessness. Our primary focus is serving individuals who are choosing to sleep rough due to the current risks associated with utilizing the shelter systems. Despite being hungry, thirsty and cold, these individuals are not typically active in seeking services or they are unaware of the services and resources available. We recognize that in order to engage clients to access programs and work toward ending their cycle of homelessness we must first support them in meeting their basic needs.

During outreach, we provide those experiencing homelessness with food, water, nutritional shakes, and Emergen-C vitamin packets. We supply people with tents, tarps, blankets, sleeping bags, emergency shelters, and foil blankets to fulfill the need for shelter. In the winter we provide people with jackets, gloves, scarves, and toques to keep warm in Calgary's cold weather. We also distribute masks and sanitize people's hands in addition to sharing information on COVID-19 and the health measures that can be taken to decrease their risk of becoming ill.





## BeTheChangeYYC

With the cold weather in Calgary and decreased numbers of individuals accessing emergency shelters, we strive to provide products to help keep those sleeping outside warm and fed. With the numbers of individuals seeking shelter outside, there is a sequential need for outreach services which includes referrals to agencies for detox and treatment services, housing, emergency shelter, medical and mental health care, clothing and food sources and legal services. We hand out resource guides with contact information for numerous Calgary agencies that address issues related to homelessness, addiction and mental health. The BeTheChangeYYC team consists of numerous professionals from sectors such as social services, health care and those with lived experience who have successfully transitioned out of homelessness and are able to offer a peer perspective.

Having a diverse team of individuals taking part in outreach efforts, we thrive to establish supportive connections to those we serve in order to address client needs on an individual basis. By providing these populations with basic needs and sustaining positive relationships with individuals experiencing homelessness we aim to mitigate mental health and addiction issues, empower and support individuals in their ability to adapt and encourage resilience in this already vulnerable community.

# Overview of 2021

2021 was a year of resilience and growing pains for BeTheChangeYYC, though fantastic nonetheless! As the COVID-19 pandemic persisted and those experiencing homelessness were further marginalized in our community, the services and items provided by BeTheChangeYYC were vital to those without homes or access to emergency shelters and services. The conversation of homelessness was sparked in Calgary's city council and the media, and our president and CEO, Chaz Smith, was active in using his voice to advocate for those experiencing homelessness, as he once had.

We moved into a new space in 2021, which increased our capacity for the storage of supplies and increased our team's efficiency and collaboration. Our new space expands our capabilities by allowing us to store more food, water, and other tangible necessities that we distribute to those experiencing homelessness, allowing us to increase our supplies on outreach.

Our new heavy-duty wagons have been marvellous as well in allowing us to physically bring out more supplies on shift. We have also increased our capacity in 2021 by beginning to facilitate outreach an additional day on Tuesdays.

## BeTheChangeYYC 2021

In 2021, we handed out:

10 947	Sandwiches
11 812	Bottles of Water
13 127	Granola Bars
2894	Emergen C
57 586	Other food and drink items



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# BeTheChangeYYC 2021

In 2021:

We helped

16 854

individuals  
experiencing  
homelessness



We gave out

6235

harm reduction supplies,  
including 1050 Naloxone  
kits



We provided

2130

referrals to  
community  
supports



## 2021 Impact

As the capacity of our team increased and extra supplies were available, BeTheChangeYYC's impact on the community increased exponentially.

In total, **96 366** food and drink items were distributed to those experiencing homelessness. This included sandwiches, burgers, fruit, water, juice boxes, granola bars, cookies, Emergen C vitamin mixes, and many other snacks.

The demand for water was high all year, but especially in the summer during the hot months because most of the public fountains were turned off due to COVID.

Just in July and August combined, we handed out **3633** water, **30%** of our total supply. In 2021, a total of **16 854** contacts were made with individuals experiencing homelessness. **5153** of these were females, and **11 701** were male. **48%** of those we served were Indigenous.



#BeTheChangeYYC

## 2021 Impact (cont.)

**6235** safe kits were supplied to those who requested clean pipes, sterile injection kits, sharps disposal containers, or Naloxone kits. Hundreds of male and female condoms, dental dams, and lubes were distributed as well. A total of **1050** Naloxone kits were distributed to those who felt safer carrying a Naloxone kit with them due to the opioid overdose epidemic. Many of these kits were used by our team to reverse overdoses encountered on outreach.



**2130** referrals were provided to those wishing to navigate the system and access available supports in the community. The referrals provided were to detox, housing, mental health, ID clinic, food, treatment, emergency shelter, medical, clothing, legal services, COVID testing, and COVID vaccinations. Our target for referrals is that **10%** of those served receive a referral to supports based on their individual needs, we surpassed this target at **13%**. **781** of the total referrals were to community services that assist with housing. Since we started to record the instances that Alpha House's DOAP Team was called in June 2021, we have called DOAP Team **38** times to ensure that individuals are transported to a safe place if they are intoxicated and in danger.



# WE DISTRIBUTED

904 SCARVES



1672 TOQUES



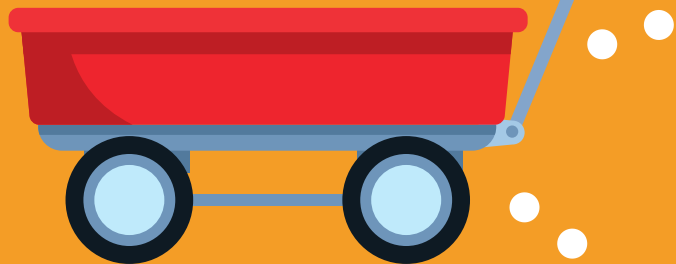
2636 PAIRS OF GLOVES



672 JACKETS



4756 PAIRS OF SOCKS



7317 EMERGENCY FOIL BLANKETS



177 HYGIENE KITS



1194 MASKS



2572 HAND & FOOT WARMERS



# BeTheChangeYYC 2021

In 2021 we facilitated:

**3328  
Volunteer  
Hours!**

## 2021 Impact (cont.)

In 2021, we facilitated a total of **3328 volunteer hours** on outreach and many more hours organizing, cleaning, and coordinating donation pick-ups and drop-offs. Over the year, we have had approximately **75 volunteers** spend time volunteering on outreach, providing those experiencing homelessness with tangible necessities and basic needs. Over the year we have also had practicum students practice and grow their skills through outreach from **Bow Valley College, Reeves College** and **CDI College**.





**We asked our volunteers for some quotes speaking on their experiences at BeTheChangeYYC:**

**"I first joined BeTheChangeYYC wanting to get involved in the vulnerable population providing sector more actively, and learn more about harm reduction, advocacy, and safety protocols. Throughout the last month, I have learnt tremendously, whether that be the actual outreach processes, the holes in the current shelter system, or the resources available out there for individuals experiencing homelessness. As well, the heart warming stories on the street, and the adrenaline-rushing opioid overdoses, are normally experiences no other grade 12 student can have at this age. I feel incredibly proud of the organization and myself especially when I was walking behind the paramedics responding to an intoxicated man, holding the walkie talkie, and wearing the high-visibility uniform" - Bill**

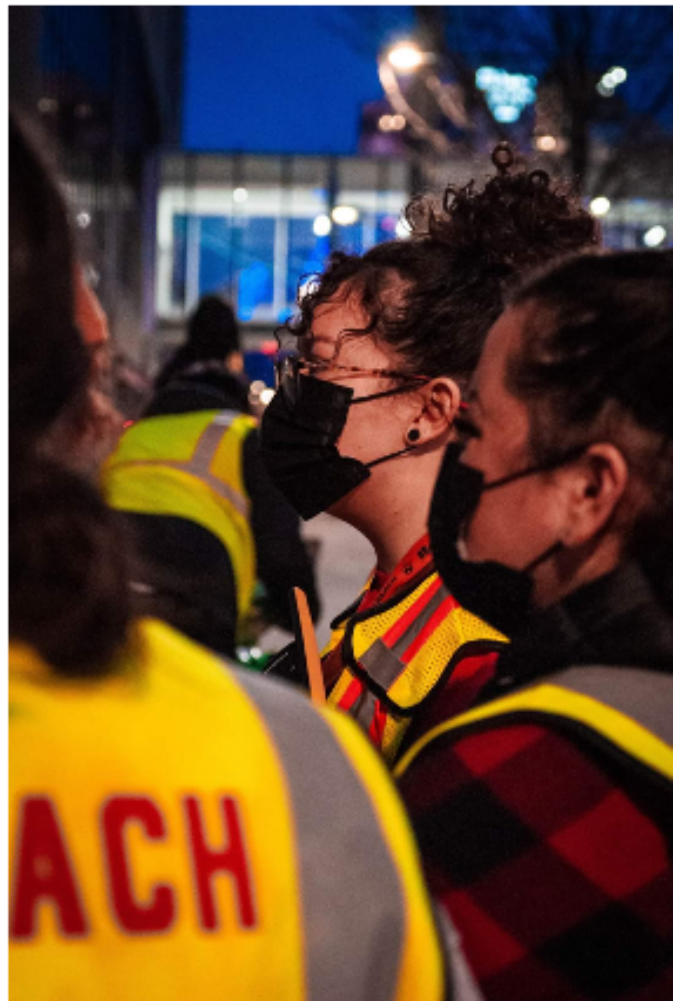
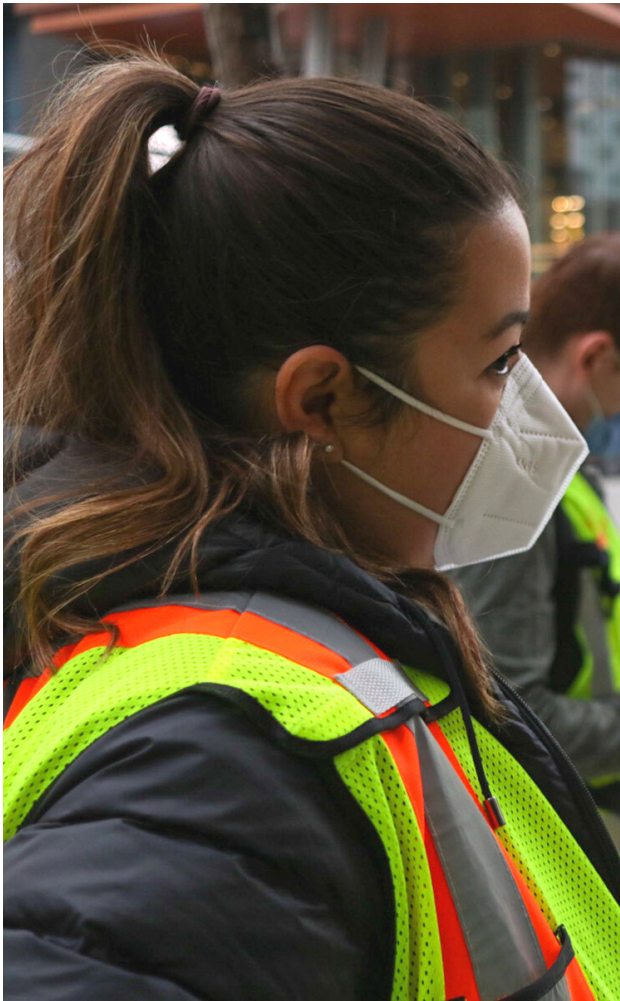
**"Seeing someone so grateful for the food and warm supplies we've given them. A simple smile and "thank you" warmed my heart." - Christy**

**"In a time where there is so much hardship and uncertainty, BeTheChangeYYC is my bright spot. I can be having the worst day, I see you guys helping all the less fortunate no matter the weather; and it truly warms my heart." - Cam**

**"BeTheChangeYYC is filling a gap by going out into the streets, meeting people where they are at, and making connections with those who are sleeping rough for a wide range of reasons that existing shelter services cannot solve. On my volunteer shifts, I've seen how grateful people are for the supplies they receive and the interactions they have with outreach workers. We're not only giving supplies and information. Our interactions are an important step in helping to build or rebuild trust for people who have faced too many barriers and challenges with all types of services." - Sherry**

**"One never may know just what is the root cause/reason someone may end up out on the streets...but it is through the compassion and consideration of others that make the lives of the rough sleepers bright and warm for even the smallest of moments."  
- Jennifer**





# Thank You

It would be impossible for us at BeTheChangeYYC to do the work we do without the support of our community and partner organizations. We rely highly on public donations from compassionate individuals and organizations who support us in helping and advocating for those experiencing homelessness. In 2021, the public has come through in making sure that we have been able to provide efficient and appropriate services and we appreciate it immensely! From the bottom of our hearts here at BeTheChangeYYC, **thank you!**

