Why

In BC, when a child in care turns 19, their government support is cut-off and they are deemed “aged-out” of the system. Today, nearly 50% of these vulnerable youth experience homelessness. Aunt Leah’s Place is there to help support these youth to make successful transitions to independence and adulthood.

Mission

Aunt Leah’s Place helps prevent children in foster care from becoming homeless and mothers in need from losing custody of their children. To support them on their journey to self-sufficiency, we provide supported housing, job training, and coaching on essential life skills.

Success

Create an environment where all children connected to the foster care system have equal opportunities akin to what parented children receive.
Francine Jennings

Francine Jennings came to Thresholds approximately a year ago. Francine was reserved and liked to keep to herself, often communicating with one word answers and avoiding eye contact with others. As she spent more time in the program, Francine started to realize that she needed to gradually move out of her comfort zone.

In order to become a better parent to her two children, Francine set 3 goals for herself. The first was to develop the skills to properly parent her children, the second was to balance her mental well being with parenting, and finally she wanted to increase her self-esteem and confidence. Francine has learned how to self-motivate herself and has established a daily routine, which includes spending quality time as a family. Francine’s love for her children and desire to become a better parent has helped her gain self-respect and self-confidence in her abilities.

Since pursuing these goals, Francine has taken on a leadership role at the Thresholds House, assisting other mothers with parenting and life skills. Francine has been able to prove to herself and demonstrate to others that one can overcome obstacles and succeed in life, no matter their past situation. Her story is an inspiration to all the mothers at Thresholds House.

The Leah Award

Unconditional Love & Support

Bruce was a friend and long time supporter of Aunt Leah’s who passed away on March 6, 2010. It was important to Bruce to be more than a donor. He also gave his time as a volunteer and shared his wisdom, helping Aunt Leah’s in various fundraising endeavors. Bruce was known among his family for giving them his unconditional love and support and was always proud of their achievements.

- In Honour of Bruce Ambrose -
Housing

Aunt Leah’s Place provides safe, supportive housing for young mothers and youth in foster care. We also help former program participants and youth who have “aged out” of foster care find long-term housing.

Programs

Aunt Leah’s innovative housing programs are far more than just housing, they focus on the needs of each individual allowing them to overcome past barriers and create balance in their life. The life skills taught in each of these programs also position participants & their families for longterm success.

Aunt Leah’s House ensures that teen mothers in foster care receive positive support during and after their pregnancy. This past year staff connected 5 mothers with a family doctor, 3 with a dentist, and 9 with an optometrist. These teen mothers now have the proper support network for a healthy future.

Support Link enriches the lives of foster youth and prepares them for independent living by providing semi independent living opportunities. This year 77% of Support Link youth were enrolled in, or graduated from high school and 100% of alumni youth who turned 19 maintained housing 6 months after leaving the program.

Thresholds House gives mothers who are at risk of homelessness a secure and safe environment for them and their children: 26 mothers & children were cared for this past year and 100% of mothers in second-stage housing retained custody of their children.
In January 2015, we introduced a Housing First component to The Link program, filling the gap in permanent housing & support service that we were previously unable to provide for young homeless care-leavers.

Through this program, The Link participants are given rental subsidies and regular support services, allowing them to enter difficult rental markets, avoid homelessness, and work on the life skills needed to ensure future self-sufficiency. Outcomes will be dramatic as ‘housed’ rates for The Link participants will improve immediately, with a goal of ‘housed’ rates moving from 86% to 98% by September 30, 2016.
The Friendly Landlord Network is a community of Metro Vancouver landlords who actively rent housing units to youth aging out of foster care. The network helps to connect at risk youth leaving foster care with safe, affordable market housing in a variety of communities.

With over 25 years of experience in working with foster youth and landlords, Aunt Leah’s Place is a natural fit to manage the Friendly Landlord Network. The objective of this project is to work with private sector partners to improve the tenure of youth leaving care, through a network of ‘friendly landlords’. It is inspired by the At Home/Chez Soi project, which found that Vancouver’s hardest-to-house could be placed in “private market rentals with numerous landlords”. The Friendly Landlord Network is funded by the Vancouver Foundation, implementation begins May 2015.
The Jeremy Wright Award

The Jeremy Wright Award was created to honour the memory of Jeremy Wright, a Support Worker who was very special to the organization. The award is to recognize and support a Support Link youth with goals that they have set and are actively working towards. It is presented to a youth living in the Support Link Program who has strived to achieve their personal best and who most “follows their bliss”

- In Honour of Jeremy Wright -

Emmy Ranville

Emmy is an outstanding individual who strives for success and joyfully pursues the things she loves most. Emmy is known for her generosity and willingness to challenge herself. We want to recognize her for her resiliency and shed light on her accomplishments. She has a strong sense of community, work ethic, academic drive, and remains the pillar in keeping her family together.

Emmy has dedicated many years as a volunteer being a camp leader in The Camp For Kids Affected by HIV. She is on the path towards achieving her Bronze Cross to become a camp counselor. While she enjoys the outdoors, she also enjoys cooking and has completed her first year of Culinary Arts school.

In addition to Culinary Arts school, Emmy is finishing her High School education and working nearly full-time as a sales person. She has aspirations of studying social and youth work and has already applied for enrollment into college.

Emmy takes pride in her native roots and wishes to explore more healing practices and aboriginal engagement. We support her journey towards becoming a successful independent young adult and encourage her as she continues to follow her bliss.
Life Skills Training

Our life skills programs and workshops provide participants with the essential skills and knowledge needed to successfully transition to living on their own. Youth learn how to plan and prepare for independent living through engaging workshops and hands on planning with a trusted care worker.

The Essential Skills program offers a variety of weekly workshops for youth. These workshops not only help youth gain valuable life skills and connect socially, but give them the opportunity to participate in creative and recreational activities. Workshops are conducted by both staff and community professionals, with topics including mental health, money management, nutrition, safety and the creative arts.

Programs

- **Essential Skills (ILLFY)**
- **The Link**
- **SEFFY Supporting Education for Foster Youth**

Program Attendance 691

69% Learned something new they could use in their life

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Attendance</th>
<th>Workshops</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>691</td>
<td>49</td>
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Education has been shown to be directly linked with a person’s quality of life and is an important key for youth to successfully transition out of care. Unfortunately, foster youth are falling behind their parented peers with regard to education. In BC, last year only 27% of foster youth graduate from high school, compared to 80% of parented youth.

Understanding the importance of education, Aunt Leah’s this past year developed and piloted its new Supporting Education for Foster Youth (SEFFY) program. SEFFY’s emphasis is on highlighting strengths, identifying needs and advocating for resources that lead to educational success for youth. Already the program is making an impact, with 75% of participants under 19 enrolled in school and 39% of The Link participants enrolled in school, showing an intrinsic desire for education. Additionally, 9 SEFFY participants earned bursaries for their education.

By targeting education, Aunt Leah’s aims to further innovate on their model of care, giving foster youth a tangible plan for a lifetime of success and personal growth.
Job Training

Aunt Leah’s job training gives youth a chance to build their employable skills, through our retail training, food preparation and cooking club programs. Youth also receive help building their resume, gathering references and job searching.

Cooking Club

- 22 Moms Trained
- 48 Cooking Classes
- 360 Meals Served

Retail Training

- 9 Youth Trained
- 430 Training Hours
- 100% Graduates who expressed a high degree of retail knowledge
Tyler Gauthier

It was my great pleasure to work with Tyler at the Burnaby Tree Lot this past December. Not only was he dependable, but he was always willing to extend himself beyond his required days and times of work, whenever the need arose – which happened quite a bit. Not one to be late, he was ALWAYS at work well before his shift began – most times between 30-40mins early, and would take the initiative to start getting the lot ready for opening (if it was an opening shift). He was aware of the fact that he lived quite a distance away and made the effort to get to work on time, even if it meant getting there too early. These are admirable qualities and were what made him such a reliable trainee. Tyler never shied away from an assigned task and approached his work with one of the greatest enthusiasms that I’ve ever seen – it was contagious.

Tyler was determined and exuded confidence, especially with relation to the customer service that he extended to potential customers - welcoming, courteous, kind and always willing to help. He was never heard to say no or that he couldn’t. Tyler was a hard worker who had pride in what he did. He is kind-hearted, compassionate and full of life – a joy to be around.

Written By Joy Walcott-Francis, Burnaby Tree Lot Manager

The Rona Award

Kindness, Compassion, Strength & Pride

This award is presented in honour of Rona Castagnier, a long time co-worker and friend of Aunt Leah’s Society. Rona was a very strong, kind, compassionate and proud person. Rona wouldn’t hesitate to give someone her last dollar if they were in need, even if it meant that she would go without. In honour of Rona, Aunt Leah’s gives an annual award and bursary to a student from one of Aunt Leah’s Training Programs who has shown the characteristics that Rona appreciated the most.

- In Honour of Rona Castagnier -
We would like to acknowledge the many organizations, businesses & foundations who help fund and contribute to Aunt Leah’s work.
This year Aunt Leah’s Tree’s celebrated its 20th anniversary. The tree lots, located in Vancouver, Burnaby, Coquitlam and North Vancouver, continue to be Aunt Leah’s largest fundraising event and its greatest form of public outreach. Over the years, Aunt Leah’s Trees has become an important Christmas tradition across Metro Vancouver.

Thanks to dedicated volunteers and motivated partners, Aunt Leah’s Trees was able to pass yet another economic milestone, exceeding $100,000 in net profit for the first time. As always, 100% of the proceeds from this social enterprise will be used directly to fund Aunt Leah’s programs, providing youth in care and young mothers access to the support they need.
Urban Thrift

Aunt Leah’s Urban Thrift features quality “pre-loved” clothing and accessories as well as a variety of furniture and household items. All profits go towards preventing children in foster care from becoming homeless, and mothers in need from losing custody of their children.

In its fourth year of operation, Urban Thrift posted another strong year of double digit growth (35%). This past year the store introduced a pilot line of baby clothing (Wee Woollies) and created an Urban Donor program, designed to bring in a steady stream of high quality donations to the store. We would like to thank the 56 dedicated volunteers who staff the store weekly.

**Urban Thrift: Average Monthly Revenue**
(Annual Comparison)

- **2011-2012**: $2,563
- **2012-2013**: $4,220
- **2013-2014**: $8,462
- **2014-2015**: $11,450
Events

In house and 3rd party events comprise another important source of revenue for Aunt Leah’s Place. These events also help us raise awareness and develop meaningful community partnerships.

Aunt Leah’s Trivia Extravaganza and silent auction, has grown to become an important annual fundraising event. Last year over 100 people attended and the event profited over $10,000. The 5th annual Trivia Extravaganza will be held this fall, October 17th, 2015.

We are thankful for all of the people and organizations who stand by Aunt Leah’s Place and support our mission through 3rd Party Events. This past year people raised money for foster youth and young mothers by running, quilting, singing, public speaking, telling jokes and even shaving their heads.

The Urban Donor Program

Become a Member and Keep Families United

Make a commitment to host an annual drive to collect lightly used clothing or accessories for Urban Thrift and help us create meaningful change for mothers and their children.

Together we can create a stream of revenue that will be used to care for homeless moms and their babies into the future. For more info or to become an Urban Donor Member contact Chloe Dunn at cdunn@auntleahs.org.
Volunteer

Volunteers are critical to the success of our programs and to the lives of the young people we care for. Our volunteers are the driving force of our Social Enterprises and Fundraising Events. We feel honoured that so many amazing people donate their time to us each year.

Join the Fun!
Volunteer at Aunt Leah’s Place

There are many ways you can make a difference at Aunt Leah’s Place. If you are interested in volunteering with us, please contact our volunteer coordinator Chloe Dunn at cdunn@auntleahs.org

433 Volunteers
6,576 Volunteer Hours

= $67k

Our highly versatile volunteers provided $67,404 in unpaid labor (set at BC’s minimum wage)
Remembering Our Friends

Jim & Anne McCullum

Anne Katharine Margaret McCullum
July 22, 1938 – October 14, 2014

James Alexander McCullum
June 27, 1935 – November 3, 2014

Sadly we say good-bye to Jim and Anne McCullum, two kind friends and two loyal supporters of Aunt Leah’s Place. They will be remembered in all areas of the organization – for volunteering their time, sending their congratulations and kind words of support, giving their financial support and being devoted ambassadors for the foster children and mothers we serve.

In addition, Jim served as Aunt Leah’s Board Chair and led us through a very challenging and important time in our history. His signature marks the purchase of our first real estate property.

We extend our condolences to Mary and David and their families. Jim and Anne’s presence will be missed at Aunt Leah’s Place.
Who We Served

Operational Statistics

Total Persons Served

191

Age Breakdown

56 Babies & Children
36 In Care Under 19
99 Aged Out Over 19

88%
Participants in Safe Secure Housing

Social Capital & Skill Development

5,000+ One-On-One Sessions & Meetings with participants
223 Workshops Completed
For the 2014-2015 Audited Financial Statements please visit auntleahs.org
This year the Board of Directors had the important task of strategizing and planning for the future of Aunt Leah’s Place. We began in September with a strategic planning day that included Aunt Leah’s Leadership Team and was facilitated by Mark Friesen from Vantage Point. Through this strategic planning session we set the priorities of the organization, assessed its strengths & weaknesses and developed four strategic goals: (1) achieving greater financial independence, (2) enhancing organizational capacity and stability, (3) delivering consistent & responsive programs, and (4) raising the profile of the organization in the community.

The Leadership Team has since developed the Operational Plan for the next year. It’s an ambitious plan that we are confident will be carried out.

The Board also helped Aunt Leah’s Place as they began the process of transferring its major assets to the Aunt Leah’s Foundation. We are grateful for Marty Frost’s expert counsel during this time and look forward to our continuing partnership with the Foundation as the purchase of the two houses is finalized.

Aunt Leah’s is also heading into its last year with Gale Stewart as its Executive Director. The Board has been working with Gale and the Leadership Team on a succession plan and we are confident as we move towards Gale’s retirement in September 2016.

I would like to thank the members of Aunt Leah’s Board - Omar Kassis, Megan Halprin, Katrina Connors, Joan Spence, and Elana Mignosa - for their dedication and valuable contributions. This summer we will be having a Board recruitment party, we ask that you come and join us if you would like to support Aunt Leah’s at the Board level.

We are truly grateful for the leadership of Gale Stewart, and are thankful for the Leadership Team and Staff who continue to deliver valuable programming and support for youth and young moms. We are also encouraged by all of the volunteers, donors and friends who continue to support Aunt Leah’s Place.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Christine Baerg
Board Chair
Aunt Leah’s
Board of Directors

Christine Baerg
Board Chair
Director of Administration
Westcoast Child Care Resource Centre

Megan Halprin
Vice Chair
Chief Financial Officer
Snowflake Trading Corp. Ltd.

Omar Kassis
Treasurer
Vancouver School Board Teacher
Cedar Walk Program

Joan Spence
Board Member
Joan Spence M.Ed, RCC
Child & Youth Counseling

Katrina Connors
Board Member
Director, Skeena Programs
Pacific Salmon Foundation

Elana Mignosa
Board Member
Vice President, Finance
Imaging and Workflow Solutions

Board L-R: Christine Baerg, Omar Kassis, Elana Mignosa, Joan Spence, Katrina Connors (Not Pictured: Megan Halprin)
Dear Friends & Supporters,

As I enter into this transitional year and my last eighteen months as Executive Director of Aunt Leah’s Place, there are many moments to pause and reflect on our 27 year history. We have come a long way and overcome many challenges, below is brief overview of our history:

**Beginning Years (1988-1996)**
- Prosperous Years with all programs funded by government
- Work Expanded and we moved from the basement of Aunt Leah’s House to a renovated garage on the property and to a larger space in South Vancouver

**Transitional Years (1996-2003)**
- Significant Government Cuts and the closing of the Aunt Leah’s House
- Moved three times and experienced our first eviction notice

**Fundraising Years (2003-2010)**
- Strategically created new ways to fund the organization, through fundraising & entrepreneurial ventures.
- Moved another three times and experienced our first slum landlord
- Received a large grant and re-opened Aunt Leah’s House

**Real Estate Years (2010-Today)**
- Received our first federal funding, a capital grant to purchase the Aunt Leah’s House.
- Through Major Gifts purchased a second house in New Westminster
- Moved into a more permanent Head Office space, thanks to the Central City Foundation and the MariaMarina Foundation, who provide funding to renovate the building.

At the close of Fiscal 2015, I would like to send out a huge thank you to the Board and staff for all the ways they continue to support and care for foster children and vulnerable moms. I would like to personally thank Chris Baerg for re-joining the Aunt Leah’s Board and for taking on the role of Board Chair. Finally, I would like to thank the many individuals who over the years have ensured our safe arrival as a dynamic and caring organization. Your financial gifts and volunteer time are changing the direction of foster care in our province.

In the spirit of Leah,

Gale Stewart
Executive Director
Aunt Leah’s Staff
Building a Brighter Future for Foster Kids

Gale Stewart
Executive Director

Sarah Stewart
Program Director

Angelina Oats
Director Of Training & Social Enterprise

Drew Stewart
Development Officer

Pam Costello
Operations Coordinator

Karin King
Fundraising Coordinator

Chloe Dunn
Volunteer & Events Coordinator

Dumi Owane
Administration & Database Coordinator

Clete Hanson
Communication Coordinator

Ali Andeku
Thrift Store Manager

Kristiina McKenzie
Warehouse Manager

Jennifer McFarlane
Human Resources Coordinator

Karen Sorenson
IT & Administration

Paul Stewart
Maintenance Manager

Bridget Orford
Purchasing Manager

Avis Lam
SEFFY Coordinator

Shelly Steiner
Cooking Club Coordinator

Shari-Lyn Rougeau
Residential Family Support Worker

Roshine Morrison
Link Coordinator

Sharon Milewski
Link Support Worker

Rachel Wuttunee
Link Support Worker

Elin Stanifurth
Link Support Worker

Michelle Roque
Support Link Program Coordinator

Ange Myers
Support Worker

Brittany Timmons
Support Worker

Justine Mathieu
Support Worker

Autumn Moreno
Aunt Leah’s House Supervisor

Amanjot Mohem
Family Support Worker

Gina Rivas Cruz
Family Support Worker

Banita Thandi
Family Support Worker

Cindy Reinhold
Family Support Worker

Andre Richer
Residential Family Worker

Kristine Eyre
Outreach Worker, Aunt Leah’s House
A New Home

This past June, with collaborative help from the Central City Foundation, Aunt Leah’s Place moved into its new head office. Centrally located - only a short walk away from the 22nd Skytrain station - the office has been custom designed to enhance the care, training and resources that Aunt Leah’s Provides to foster youth and young mothers across Metro Vancouver.

Aunt Leah’s Place would like to recognize the generous support of the MariaMarina Foundation, whose capital grant allowed us to completely re-imagine and artfully design our former thrift store, into the space it is today. This past year we have been awash with compliments, our many thanks go out to you.
Individual Donations

543

Thank you to the 543 people who made a donation to Aunt Leah’s Place this past year. Your contributions provide foster youth & young mothers with needed programs and a supportive community.

Aunt Leah’s Place would like to recognize and individually thank those individuals who donated over $1,000 this past year.

Anne Gartshore
Brendan Killackey
Bruce Adams
Bryan Twells
Cecilia and Kenneth Ng
Christine Baerg
Derek Pope
Ebie and Ian Pitfield
Elene Woollard
Eveline Burman
Gale & Paul Stewart
Gerald Voogd
Henrietta Szakun
Joanne Woehrle
Launette & Michael Rieb

Lindsay Paterson
Lisa Sturgess
Megan Halprin
Margaret Potvin
Margot Elizabeth Innes
Mark Hiebert
Melvin Davie
Mylo Riley
Nancy Heimbecker
Paula Gallagher
Philip Snobelen
Randy Chambers
Rob and Debra Mitchell
Verlon Otto
William Koch

Finally, we would like to thank the many organizations who have made in kind donations to Aunt Leah’s Place. These donations fill specific needs and provide invaluable experience & knowledge to our organization.
Brighter Future
Monthly Donor Community

Adah Crawford
Alex Currie
Angelina Oates
Annabel Mead
Anna Willan
Anne Gartshore
Anne McCullum
Ariel Creighton
Beverly (Linda) Friess
Bridget Orford
Bruce Adams
Bryan Twells
Carole MacKay
Catherine J Moody
Catherine Schindell
Chloe Dunn
Cindy Johnson
Clete Hanson
Coraline Félix
Corinne Durston
Corrie Chow
Darlene Cathcart
Dean Strugnell
Diane Newton
Donna Treptow
Don Sturgess
Doreen Stephens
Elizabeth Bowker
Elizabeth Williams
Erlene Woollard
Eunice MacCharles
Fran Tanner
Gale Stewart
Galt and Gerda Wilson
Gary Tennant
Ginger Virginia Shaw
Graham Fleming
Helen Hama
Irene Harvalias
Jane Power
Janet Mitchell
Janet Prowse
Jean Dunnett
Jennifer Zabkar
John Ingram
John Lenaghan
John Mosca
Jolene Lansdowne
Jonathan McCleery
Judi Curtiss
Judith Bain Dampier
Karen Madeiros
Karin King
Kathy Skelton
Kimberly Carol Tough
Kira Gerwing
Kristin Jamieson
Kyle Morton
Launette Rieb
Lauren Tittley
Lia Crown
Linda Yurechko
Lisa Sturgess
Lois Walker
Louise Sturgess
Marcie Outerbridge
Margaret Gallagher
Mari Brown
Mark Hiebert
Megan Halprin
Michael Rieb
Molly Caron
Muriel Kerr
Nancy E Barker
Nancy Maranda
Pam Costello
Patricia Cooper
Patricia Joyce
Paul Stewart
Paul Tyler
Penny McCleery
Penny Nation
Rachael McKendry
Ralph Sabey
Romilly Cavanaugh
Sandra Hoath
Sarah Blay
Sarah Stewart
Sharon Smith
Shar Silveira
Sheila Kelton
Shirley Hammond
Shoni Field
Sondra Marshall
Steven Lam
Tammy Munro
Todd Sakakibara
Tracy Craigen
Tracy Sherlock
Trevor Simpson
Verlon Otto
Vic Martens
Zona Macdonald
Thank You!

Thanks to the generous support of our donors and sponsors, Aunt Leah’s Place can continue to build a brighter future for foster kids. We are proud to share that our programs have a **1:5 Social Return On Investment**, as evaluated by Success Markets Inc. Meaning for every dollar donated, $5 is contributed back in savings to society and gains to participants.
We are always looking for supporters who will act as ambassadors for foster children and vulnerable moms. One way you can help us in promoting awareness is by hosting a “Circle Of Friends” gathering in your home, at a community meeting or in your workplace. One of Aunt Leah’s Leadership Team, a Board Member or the Executive Director would be happy to speak, share stories or be part of a conversation about the lives of foster children in British Columbia. Creating awareness through a “Circle Of Friends” is a powerful and engaging way to promote social justice and change.

Give us a call if you would like more information.