Our Mission

Aunt Leah’s 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.

Our Core Values

Celebration is essential to a successful life.

An individual’s artistic/soulful centre must be expressed and appreciated.

Success is fragile and must be tended to and supported with care.

All behaviour has meaning and is the human tool for communication.

Entrepreneurial spirit builds individuals and organizations.

Community building ensures that we all have a place to go when we need support.
What We Do

Aunt Leah’s offers four main areas of support services in Metro Vancouver for youth and young moms to help them transition to independent living.

Housing

The housing we provide consists of semi-independent living suites, as well as communal living for young single moms and their babies.

Job Training

Job Training opportunities are available for work in restaurants, retail stores, and landscaping. Training includes work experience, help with resumes, interviewing and finding jobs for youth.

Life Skills Training

We teach basic life management skills necessary for independent living, including banking, budgeting, health and well being, laundry, cleaning, shopping, and cooking.

Quality of Life Opportunities

In addition to the necessities, we provide Quality of Life Opportunities (participation in activities that add meaning to life), such as personal celebrations, recreation and group outings.

“I came to Aunt Leah’s when I was 15. I was on my own and pregnant. I was so scared I didn’t know what was going to happen. I came to the house expecting the worst but I found people who cared what happened to me and didn’t judge me. I learned to respect myself and turn my life around. I have become successful in my personal and professional life because of the things I learned at Aunt Leah’s.”

Message from the Board Chair

Sara Getz

As Board Chair, it is my great pleasure to report to Aunt Leah’s many friends and supporters. As always, I am in awe of the tremendous dedication of Gale and the staff who work tirelessly to ensure that Aunt Leah’s continues to provide the best possible programs and services to youth and young mothers.

The past year has been one of incredible growth and change at Aunt Leah’s, beginning with the launch of our new brand and website last fall. If you haven’t already, please take some time to explore the new website and get to know the new face of Aunt Leah’s.

We opened two new Christmas Tree Lot locations, which have been very well received, and the Urban Thrift Store is enjoying all the benefits that come with the increased visibility at its new home on East Broadway (at Main Street). There are great treasures to be found, the staff is very helpful and knowledgeable, and the new space is warm and inviting.

The Thresholds House is up and running and early in the Spring, we were pleased to welcome the first moms and babies. The house, located in New Westminster, is the second house Aunt Leah’s has purchased in the last two years, the first being Aunt Leah’s House. We are working hard to build a solid future for Aunt Leah’s, our programs, and the youth we serve.

While the financial statements reflect that we have concluded the past year with a small surplus, I firmly believe that the organization is well-positioned for the future. When combined with the continued success of our Christmas Tree Lots and the ongoing support of our incredible donors and friends, having secured a second house and a new location for the Thrift Store, I am certain that Aunt Leah’s will continue to grow and thrive in the years to come.

I would like to extend a very special thank you to all of our donors and supporters. Without you, Aunt Leah’s couldn’t provide the services and programs for youth and young mothers that have made the organization such a vital resource in our community.

Sara Getz
Message from the Executive Director

Gale Stewart

This year has been one of much activity and many accomplishments. All of these have been described in the other annual reports. For me, the greatest accomplishment of this past year is reaching a place as an organization where we are now receiving financial support from all three levels of government. We have had this goal for many years. This year we accomplished it.

About 15 years ago a group of us sat together and contemplated the closing of Aunt Leah’s. It was a very sad gathering. Government cuts were beginning in British Columbia and Aunt Leah’s had become vulnerable. Since our incorporation in 1988 we had been solely supported by the province. We had no experience of any other way of doing business.

Thankfully, the crisis that we faced at that time was revoked by government but a new passion entered the heart of the organization and a very important decision was made that day – Aunt Leah’s would dedicate itself to becoming an innovative and entrepreneurial organization. We promised that we would never allow ourselves to be in this vulnerable situation again. As the year 2000 approached there were more cuts and in 2004 we lost our provincial government contract for the Aunt Leah’s House – our founding program. This lasted for a period of five years and was renegotiated in 2010.

But we continued to pursue our goal. We learned how to fundraise. We courageously asked individuals, organizations, churches, and foundations to support our mandate. We opened social enterprises. We researched and explored ways to obtain funding from all three levels of government. Our goal was to create a basket of diverse funders who were committed to changing the outcomes for foster children in British Columbia.

This year marked the accomplishment of that goal – one that we so innocently and so bravely made way back then. These two new grants (federal and municipal) will financially support our LINK & Thresholds Programs and give us the distinction of providing a continuum of care from babyhood to young adulthood. How exciting. How important. It is what every family hopes to provide and many of you have helped us arrive at this new place of service. Next year is our 25th Anniversary. What a great cause for celebration.

This year we have experienced all of what life offers - struggles, achievements, weddings, births, and the passing of loved ones.

- Last summer, I along with other staff, had the pleasure of attending Theresa Frazao’s wedding at Queen Elizabeth Park. I extend my continued best wishes to Theresa and Carlo as they continue their journey together.

- Our Board Chair, Sara Getz, became an expectant mother and a few short weeks ago little Henry joined the family. Our best wishes to Sara and Jim on the safe arrival of their first born.

- In the spring, we said good-bye to two long term staff members - Brook Calvert and Theresa Frazao. Brook has been with us for over five years and Theresa for over sixteen years. We wish them the best as they both move on professionally in their careers.

- Our Board composition will be reduced over the next few months as we say farewell to six Board members (Marty Frost, Megan Halprin, Jim McCullum, Sara Getz, Tammy Munro, and Kristin Jamieson.) It has been my privilege to serve under your leadership. I look forward to the new fiscal year and to working with Bina Bawa, Marilyn Ker-foot & Andrea Harris.

- Recently we received news that two past staff of Aunt Leah’s had passed away – Rod Fregin and Elias Woytkiw. Rod was a support worker and his kindness and truth telling will always be remembered as part of the important work he did at Aunt Leah’s.

Elias was a friend and companion in the formation of Aunt Leahs. We met in the early 1980’s and he supported my notion that street youth could benefit from a semi-independent living program. Over the years Elias continued to support me in many ways and he became Aunt Leah’s first Maintenance Manager. He retired in 2000 and moved out of Vancouver to be closer to his family. I regret not making that visit to his new home in Cultus Lake but I will always remember his support and care for myself and Aunt Leah’s. My sincere condolences go out to his family for their loss.

As always I would like to thank the staff of Aunt Leah’s. They are the heart, the soul, the hands and feet of the service delivered to Aunt Leah’s young people. My special thanks to Sarah, Angelina, Pam, and Autumn for their tremendous support during the last two months of this fiscal year, and while I was out of the country.

Finally to you the reader, please continue to remember Aunt Leah’s young people. They need places and people to support their crucial “beginnings.” Thank you for your support.

Gale Stewart
This past year has been full of new partnerships and projects leading to solid programming that is based on the needs of the young people and families we serve. New projects that began in 2011-12 include the re-opening of the Thresholds Program and Retail Training Program and completing our CARF Accreditation survey. New partnerships were established with Circle of Eagles, Fraser Health Aboriginal Services, Frontier College and Odyssey I and many organizations, churches, and foundations.

Thanks to the John Hardie Mitchell Family Foundation, the Pacifica Family Addictions Foundation and the Yunnan Foundation, Aunt Leah’s was able to purchase its second house which will support homeless moms and babies. The Thresholds Program is a supportive housing program for homeless new moms who are recovering from addiction. The Thresholds Program keeps families together and provides a dignified chance for our moms to parent. From 2007 to 2009 the Thresholds Program operated out of what is now Aunt Leah’s House. During this time we worked with 16 moms and babies and received 46 referrals. Recently Aunt Leah’s staff followed up on those 16 moms and learned that 12 of those moms continue to have their children in their custody. This program has demonstrated there is a need and successes happen for the families involved. Aunt Leah’s is so excited to be re-opening this program and have the opportunity to work with this group of women and this unique opportunity to share with the moms the birth of a child and the feeling of hope and aspirations connected with this.

Our Retail Training Program found its new location thanks to support from the Central City Foundation. Conveniently located in New Westminster, participants from our residential programs have found it easier to access the program and benefit from the training they receive. This new space also houses a warehouse for the new Urban Thrift Store in Vancouver and will provide second-stage housing for the moms leaving the Thresholds Program.

In June, Aunt Leah’s welcomed CARF (The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) to view our programming and administration through a “CARF Survey.” For three days CARF Surveyors viewed/toured our programs, reviewed our paperwork and policies and interviewed our participants, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders. At the end of the survey the surveyors presented their report with some recommendations on how to improve what we are doing. Aunt Leah’s received a three year extension on our accreditation status which is the best result from the survey process.

The recommendations we received were very helpful and Aunt Leah’s staff have been working hard at implementing them. We are looking forward to CARF’s return in 2014 for our next survey.

Aunt Leah’s has been focusing on connecting more with other agencies and establishing long term relationships. Our goal is to have other service providers offer their unique programming in our building where the Aunt Leah’s Youth feel comfortable and safe. Partnerships have been established with Odyssey 1, which is connected with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southwest BC, who provide drug and alcohol counseling. Odyssey’s counselors have come into Aunt Leah’s House, Thresholds House and to our Essential Skills Workshops to casually connect with our youth and establish a relationship that allows our participants to feel comfortable and safe around asking questions about drugs and alcohol use which might possibly lead to counseling. In addition we have partnered with Circle of Eagles and have provided meals for Elders through our Food Preparation Program. Aunt Leah’s was also excited to begin a partnership with Frontier College. The college provides two amazing volunteer tutors who come in weekly to our office.

Our core programming (Support Link and Aunt Leah’s House) continues to provide much needed services through our contracts with the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Support Link continues to offer a supported semi-independent living experience for teens who are about to leave government care. For many of our youth, this is the first time they will be living on their own. Support Link works with youth primarily 17 and 18 years old. They have until their 19th birthday to receive support from MCFD at which point they are considered adults and must then access services through the adult system.

We have experienced a record year of young people attending school while in the Support Link Program. Staff have been busy adjusting their schedules and supporting each youth to continue their studies while living on their own. We are very proud of our Support Link Youth. They get up each morning and make their way to school without a parent present to encourage and support. This trend of attending school has continued at Aunt Leah’s House. Aunt Leah’s House is a group home for pregnant and parenting aboriginal teen moms. Attending school is challenging enough without stable family support. To be able to continue with schooling while experiencing motherhood for the first time is amazing. Thanks to the tutors from Frontier College, our youth and young moms can access support with specific courses through the tutorial program at the New Westminster Office.

It’s been an exciting year. Once again we are inspired by the perseverance of the young people and families who access our service. Aunt Leah’s staff continue to go above and beyond to support each participant with their life goals.

Sarah Stewart
Board of Directors

Aunt Leah’s Board Members volunteered over 420 hours from April 2010 to March 2011. In addition to their work in governance, they also assisted with several fundraising events throughout the year. Thank you for your hard work and dedication!

Sara Getz
Board Chair
Senior Development Officer

Bina Bawa
Vice Chair
Account Manager, Business Banking
HSBC Bank Canada

Marty Frost
Treasurer
Human Ventures
Cooperative and Non-Profit Development and Training

James McCullum
Past Board Chair
Retired Anglican Priest

Tammy Munro
Board Member
Aboriginal Infant Development Consultant
Vancouver/Coastal AIDP Regional Advisor

Kristin Jamieson
Board Member
Associate Partner
Compton Fundraising Consultants

Andrea Harris
Board Member
Fairware Promotional Products
VanCity

Judi Curtiss
(Former) Board Member
Retired

Marilyn Kerfoot
Board Member
Fundraising Consultant
Marilyn Kerfoot Consulting

Megan Halprin
Board Secretary
Chief Financial Officer
Snowflake Trading Corp.

"Having let go of my old lifestyle habits, I found myself trapped between two worlds. One that I did not want to be a part of any more, and one that I did not have the skills to be a part of. I learned to get healthy and now I have come to a place in my life where I dare to dream. You have given me more gifts than I could ever put into words. Thank you so much for caring."

Staff Members
Current Staff as of September 17, 2012

Management Team

Executive Director
Gale Stewart

Program Director
Sarah Stewart

Director of Training Programs
Angelina Oates

Development Team

Donor Relations
Karin King

Marketing and Communications Manager
Trina Bagnall

Aunt Leah’s House

Program Coordinator
Autumn Moreno

Family Support Workers
Amanjot Mohem
Laura Balaski
Cindy Reinhold

Thresholds and Link

Thresholds and Link Coordinator
Alicia Block

Outreach Workers
Roshine Morrison
Carrie-Marie Fernandes
Cindy Young
Shianne Kauhausen

Training Programs

Antonio Dominelli
Katharine Russell
Tai Tang

Support Link

Program Coordinator
Pam Costello

Aunt Leah’s House

Maintenance Manager
Paul Stewart

Support Workers
Husain Vahanvaty
Renee Kress
Joanne Orbeck
Michelle Roque
Steve Araujo

Administration

Financial Officer
Ruth Hoffman

Human Resources Manager
Karry Shaw

Technical Support
Karen Sorenson

Purchasing Manager
Bridget Orford

Maintenance Manager
Paul Stewart

Aunt Leah’s Urban Thrift Store
Store Manager
Ali Andeku

“Having let go of my old lifestyle habits, I found myself trapped between two worlds. One that I did not want to be a part of any more, and one that I did not have the skills to be a part of. I learned to get healthy and now I have come to a place in my life where I dare to dream. You have given me more gifts than I could ever put into words. Thank you so much for caring.”
Aunt Leah’s Independent Lifeskills Society
Statement of Operations
For the Year Ended March 31, 2012

Revenue
Fees for service $1,153,676
Projects and fundraising 188,034
BC Gaming Commission 67,300
Donations and grants 579,611
Government grant - Aunt Leah’s House 601
$1,989,222

Expenses
Advertising and promotion $13,202
Amortization 8,868
Bank charges 12,217
Contract service fees 63,219
Food and clothing 126,883
Insurance 11,919
Office and operating expense 27,214
Professional fees 9,626
Program and training 51,275
Recreation 16,265
Repairs and maintenance 59,999
Rent 382,224
Salaries and benefits 1,023,108
Staff development 8,509
Technology services 33,790
Transportation 69,061
Utilities 51,073
$1,968,452

Excess of Expense Over Revenue $20,770

If you would like a copy of our audited Financial Statements prepared by Galloway Botteselle & Company, please contact us at auntleahs@auntleahs.org or by phone at 604-525-1204

Participants Served Through Aunt Leah’s Programs
April 1, 2011 - March 31, 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residential Programs</th>
<th>Persons Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support Link</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aunt Leah’s House</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moms:</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babies:</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thresholds</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moms:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Babies:</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Skills Programs</th>
<th>Persons Served</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential Skills Workshops</td>
<td>21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42 workshops were held</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Link Program/Drop-In</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training Programs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Training</td>
<td>23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooking Club</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landscape Training</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Participants receiving services</td>
<td>190</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Average number of participants per workshop – total attendance was at 892 participants but this total reflects many of the same participants attending different workshops.

**There is a lower number of retail training participants than previous years because the Thrift Store was closed for ten months. However, a new retail training program began at the Burnaby Christmas Tree Lot in December and the Aunt Leah’s Urban Thrift Store opened in December followed by re-establishing the retail training program in New Westminster at the Thrift Store Warehouse site.

Total Participants – this number reflects the total sum of all participants in each program for the year. However, some participants may be in more than one program.
Aunt Leah’s House

Aunt Leah’s House is a licensed residential program for pregnant and parenting Aboriginal Teen Mothers.

Aunt Leah’s is dedicated to providing young mothers with a safe and comfortable home where they can begin to parent and adjust to the changes that are happening in their lives. We provide support and information so they can make plans for their future and give them a dignified chance to be a mother.

We provide weekly life skills and parenting workshops and the moms have access to two public health nurses, an alcohol and drug counselor, and an outreach worker; who are able to support and connect them with outside resources while at the house.

Many of the moms who have accessed our program at Aunt Leah’s House have had very little family support and come from an unstable background. The moms are foster children themselves. At Aunt Leah’s, we believe we are like an extended family for these young vulnerable teen moms.

“From the first step into that house I knew that was where I needed to be. The staff supported me emotionally, physically, and mentally during this very difficult time of my life.”

Support Link is a semi-independent residential program that integrates housing with Life Skills Training and Pre-Employment Opportunities. Program participants live in a basement suite under the supervision of a friendly landlord and have a support worker to help them learn how to set goals and live on their own.

Children who are in the care of the Ministry of Children & Family Development (MCFD) must learn how to live on their own by their 19th birthday. Aunt Leah’s Place developed the Support Link Program to meet this need. The Support Link Program helps foster children between the ages of 15 and 18 years old to make the transition from government care to independent living.

We have a total of 16 Support Link suites under contract with Vancouver Coastal and South Fraser MCFD regions. Two of the Support Link suites are dedicated to youth needing additional one-on-one support.

In addition to housing and one-on-one support, the youth in the program are provided with opportunities to improve social connections to family, adults, friends and community; on-call staff for emergencies 24-hours a day; a monthly clothing allowance; a weekly food allowance; support learning how to budget and manage time; and access to all of Aunt Leah’s training and life skills programs.

This year, Aunt Leah’s Place has partnered with Frontier College to provide tutors to our Support Link youth who are attending school. Frontier College offers tutoring sessions and literacy upgrading. The partnership has been very successful and we now have secured an additional tutor for Aunt Leah’s House.

“...without Aunt Leah’s, I don’t think I would have made it this far. I probably would be either still on the streets or dead by now.”
Thresholds is a supportive housing program for mothers who are recovering from alcohol and drug addictions. Thresholds provides a safe, affordable, and positive environment to care for their children and themselves.

This January was a very exciting time for Thresholds as it reopened its doors in New Westminster. The Thresholds Program has also continued providing second-stage housing out of the basement site at Aunt Leah’s house. This aids moms and babies transitioning from Aunt Leah’s House to living independently.

Since Thresholds opened in January 2012, staff has worked to support five mothers and babies. During this time, Thresholds residents have learned many life skills and continue to grow in their new role as mothers.

Our moms have become involved with the community; learned how to grow and maintain their own garden at the house; increased visitation time with their children; learned how to keep their living space clean and baby safe; volunteered time to give back to others in need; attended weekly programming to learn new parenting skills; and continue to build a positive, supportive environment for themselves and their children.

The Link Program continues to provide support to youth who have aged out of the foster care system and are now transitioning into adulthood. Link has expanded in the last year, thanks to the final year of funding from the Vancouver Foundation, allowing many youth to access support as they need it.

The Link Program now has set drop-in days (Wednesday and Thursday) so that if youth need help in areas of schooling, housing, job search, budgeting, emotional support, filing taxes, finding a doctor, preparing for a job interview, and other life-skill supports; there are staff ready and available to assist them.

In 2011 there were 36 youth who accessed support from the Link team. As of August 2012, we’ve seen a notable increase in youth accessing the Link Program—a clear indication that the Link Program is a successful and important program to the youth and young adults accessing Aunt Leah’s services.

In 2011 Link participants who accessed the emergency food cupboard grew to 58% from 48% in 2010. Through our work, we’ve found that the three primary areas of need are housing, education, and employment. (See chart on page 20.)
The workshops are held once a week, every Wednesday evening from 5pm to 7pm. They are designed to provide a fun and interesting opportunity for the young people that we work with to develop various life skills.

Over the past year we have held workshops around topics of Mental Health, Drug and Alcohol Awareness, Health and Well Being, Environment, and Cultural Awareness. We continue to build relationships with outside agencies by booking guest speakers to cover a wide range of topics.

The number of youth has increased in the past year and we need to find a larger workspace to fit our growing needs. Thanks to Douglas College, we have been using one of their rooms just up the street and it’s working out great.

Aunt Leah’s has also partnered with Odyssey 1 by inviting two of their Drug and Alcohol Counselors into our building on Wednesdays to connect casually with our youth. Thanks to this arrangement, some workshop participants have engaged in more formal Drug and Alcohol counseling relationships.

“Before Aunt Leah’s, no one actually ever respected me. When I met you guys, you actually trusted and respected me.”

“Seeing these young people, who come from diverse, difficult backgrounds, cooperate in a group setting, embrace arts and crafts, and generally step out of their comfort zones, is a constant reminder of why I love my work.” - Angelina Oates, Director of Training Programs

Aunt Leah's Landscape Training Program is a 12 session program that operates in the metro Vancouver area. Last year 16 youth, either current or past participants of Aunt Leah's residential programs, participated in the training.

During the late Fall and the early Spring months, the program concentrates on cleaning up yards and gardens; and pruning and shaping shrubbery and trees. Later in the Spring and during the Summer and early Fall, the major work is lawn maintenance.

The venues for Landscape Training are customers who are interested in supporting Aunt Leah's Society and its work. Customers pay market price plus a fee for training costs.

On the long weekend in May, we partnered with Bentall Kennedy, at the Bentall towers in downtown Vancouver, to sell the tulip and daffodil bulbs that are dug up each spring from the flower beds at the towers. Aunt Leah's youth helped to package and sell the bulbs and part of the proceeds were donated to support the Landscape Training Program.

“Last fall, a landscaper contacted Aunt Leah’s to inquire if we had any trainees who would be interested in working part-time in her business during the fall months. We referred two youth and they both worked for her. One has continued on this Spring to work for her part-time.

The challenge is the location of the work. Aunt Leah's youth live mainly in the Burnaby/Surrey area, and the work is typically on the far west side of Vancouver. Transportation routes connecting these two areas are challenging. For our youth to participate in this employment shows some measure of commitment and maturity.” - Paul Stewart, Landscape / Maintenance
Retail Training is a comprehensive 96-hour program, designed for youth to receive skills, training, and experience in a retail environment.

This has been a big year in Retail Training. We’ve introduced our new and unique Retail Tree Lot Training Program. Youth trained 96 hours over 5 weeks at our Christmas Tree Lot in Burnaby. They learned skills such as customer service, cash handling, sales, promotions, inventory, stocking shelves, and opening/closing procedures.

The program also teaches “soft skills” such as communication, organization, professionalism, efficiency, following directions, and initiative. Youth engage in physical labour setting up and taking down the lot. They also experience some holiday spirit. Aunt Leah’s ended the session with a Graduation Ceremony celebrating the students’ successes.

We are also excited to tell you that we re-opened our new Aunt Leah’s Urban Thrift Store at 177 Broadway and look forward to its success.

With the generous support of the Central City Foundation we have opened a secondary location in New Westminster which will be set up as a warehouse training site. We will be opening a year-round Retail Training Program at this site.

Food Service Training, affectionately known as “Cooking Club,” is a comprehensive 12-week program that helps young people get employment and life-skills training in food preparation.

Our students develop their culinary skills throughout a 12-week curriculum that incorporates preparing tasty, low-cost, easy meals while preparing a lunch every week for the St. Mark’s Anglican Community Meal. Students leave the program with experience in food preparation, kitchen safety / sanitation, and food handling. Upon successful completion of the program, students are invited to attend a graduation ceremony and are provided with a certificate and reference from their trainer.

New this year, Aunt Leah’s started up a second Food Service Training Program specifically designed to work with moms from our Aunt Leah’s House and Thresholds programs. We also partnered up with Circle of Eagles (Anderson Healing Lodge for Aboriginal Women). The women learn how to prepare tasty, low-cost, easy meals for themselves and their children, as well as preparing a free biweekly lunch for Elders in the community. Students leave the program with experience in food preparation, kitchen safety and sanitation, food handling and a set of recipes to prepare at home.

“Recently my son became a trainee in Aunt Leah’s Restaurant Training Program. He tells me that this training with its hands-on work experience has been the most positive experience of his teenage years thus far. He finished the program, completing the following three certificates: Superhost, First Aid and Foodsafe. As a result of the Restaurant Training Program, he was able to find employment this summer at Superstore, his first job.”

“I was impressed by the gentle, behind the scenes supervision of the staff and the manner in which the program participants conducted themselves. I only wish that more people had the opportunity to see our youth, who are so often seen as troublemakers, acting as respectful, productive members of society.”
In June 2011, Aunt Leah’s welcomed CARF (The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) to view our programming and administration through a “CARF Survey”.

For three days CARF Surveyors viewed/toured our programs, reviewed our paperwork and policies and interviewed our participants, staff, volunteers and other stakeholders.

At the end of the survey, Aunt Leah’s received a three year extension on our accreditation status which is the maximum allowable extension! (Pictured above: Aunt Leah’s staff with CARF surveyors)

Thanks to the John Hardie Mitchell Family Foundation, the Pacifica Family Addictions Foundation and the Yunnan Foundation, Aunt Leah’s was able to purchase its second house which will support homeless moms and babies. Thresholds is a supportive housing program for homeless new moms who are recovering from addiction.

Executive Director Gale Stewart celebrates opening of Thresholds.

Revenue from Christmas Tree Lots 2011

Coquitlam $32,600.00
(New this year - open three days a week)

North Vancouver $46,165.00
(New this year - open every day)

Burnaby $52,836.00

Vancouver $94,675.00

Notable Accomplishments!

Revenue from Christmas Tree Lots 2011

Coquitlam $32,600.00
(New this year - open three days a week)

North Vancouver $46,165.00
(New this year - open every day)

Burnaby $52,836.00

Vancouver $94,675.00

Secondary Areas of Need in order:
1. Employment
2. General Support
(such as filing taxes, accessing healthcare, etc)
3. Education
4. Finance
5. Emotional Support

Housing!

Primary Areas of Need

Gender and Ethnicity of Youth Accessing the Link Program in 2011

- Male
- Female
- Transgender

- White Canadian
- Aboriginal
- Dual heritage
- Norwegian
- Taiwanese
- Unknown
In Memory of
Elias Woytkiw

November 20, 1935—August 20, 2012

Elias was a friend and companion in the formation of Aunt Leah’s, as well as our first Maintenance Manager. He retired in 2000 and moved to a mobile home site in Cultus Lake to be closer to his family. There, he continued his compassionate ways by helping seniors with little odd jobs. He got himself a wonderful dog, part Blue Heeler, part Shepherd, and called him "Buddy;” and passed the days working in his lovely garden full of vegetables, which he passed around the neighborhood freely. His doctor told him he was the oldest man he knew who could hike to the top of "Teapot" mountain, a hiking trail in Cultus Lake. Elias was very proud of this accomplishment. Elias will always be remembered as a handyman with a heart of gold.

In Memory of
Rodney Fregin

January 21, 1942—July 2, 2012

Rod was a caring and gentle man who dedicated most of his life to helping others. He and his wife, Yvonne, both worked for Aunt Leah’s. In fact, together, they were the first couple to have both won the “Courage to Come Back” award from the Coast Mental Health Foundation. Rod was a support worker at Aunt Leah’s and his kindness and truth telling will always be remembered as part of the important work he did.
The Leah Award

“Un conditional Love and Support”
In honour of Bruce Ambrose

Bruce was a friend and long-time supporter of Aunt Leah’s who passed away on March 16, 2010. It was important to Bruce to be more than a donor—he also gave his time as a volunteer and he shared his wisdom, helping Aunt Leah’s in various fundraising endeavors. Bruce was known in his family for giving them his unconditional love and support and was always proud of their many achievements.

2012 Recipient of the Leah Award

Dianna Myles

Dianna came to us 4 months ago with her son Adrian and with very little family supports in place. Throughout her time in the program we have watched Dianna blossom as a kind and loving parent.

Dianna has been attending the in-house parenting workshops and has used the information she has received to enhance her parenting toolbox. She is working hard to attend school and is determined to graduate with the dream of becoming a wedding planner, and a goal to make a better life for her and her son.

Dianna graduated from the Retail Training program and we watched her self-confidence grow. She has shown unconditional love and support to her family. For this and many other reasons, she was chosen for The Leah Award. Congratulations Dianna!

The Jeremy Wright Award

“Follow Your Bliss”

Aunt Leah’s presents this award in memory of Jeremy Wright, a Support Worker who was very special to us. 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”. The award is based on character and determination.

2012 Recipient of the Jeremy Wright Award

Caden Lutz

Caden is a kind and thoughtful young man who is always willing to learn from others. He is a positive person who looks for the good in other people.

Caden has a clear idea of what he wants to do in his life and is pursuing his dream. Caden has a desire to work in the robotics field (which deals with the design, construction, operation and application of robots). He made a robot from scratch with a laser sensor that shoots marbles when it senses movement.

Caden recently attended the UBC Robotics Camp. He excelled in the program and was given an opportunity to return to the next session of the camp to volunteer and help other students. He was given a letter of reference from UBC for this work.

Caden has connected with the Vancouver Robotics Association where he has been working on the MindStorm kit as well as on circuit boards and the physics of robotics. He has his sights set on attending UBC when he graduates from high school or studying robotics in Japan, if possible. Congratulations Caden!
The Rona Award

This award is presented in honor 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: Kindness, Compassion, Strength, and Pride.

2012 Recipient of the Rona Award

Robert Davidson

Robert has been involved in the Support Link program at Aunt Leah's for more than a year. He has attended school full time and participated in the Landscape Training program last summer before school resumed. He also graduated from the Christmas Tree Lot Retail training while continuing on at school.

In both training programs Robert was always dependable. Both programs are outdoors, which means that inclement weather is inevitable. That did not deter Robert from attending.

The training programs also required working as a team. Again Robert worked well with others. He was considerate and teachable and pulled his weight. He is well-liked by his coworkers, other volunteers, and staff.

In the Tree Lot Retail program there was considerable interaction with customers. Robert has a quiet personality, but he is very effective in approaching and dealing with customers. He shows particular compassion for children.

Robert is a most deserving recipient of the Rona award as he has shown qualities of consistency, compassion, loyalty, and diligence. Congratulations Robert!
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“My 16 year old son has obtained his first job at the Bread Garden. He was able to put the Community Meal program on his resume, and took with him skills related to the food service industry, which he learned through the Aunt Leah’s Restaurant Training Program. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that he was able to get this first job as a direct result of his involvement with Aunt Leah’s.”

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Andrew Mahon Foundation
Chimp Foundation
Face the World Foundation
Hamber Foundation
John Hardie Mitchell
Family Foundation
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KMC Foundations
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TZU CHI Foundation of Canada
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Vancity Community Foundation
Vancity Corporate Social Responsibility
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The Kindness For Kids Initiative

Thank you to everyone who became a member of our Kindness For Kids Initiative. The Kindness For Kids Initiative is a new way of looking at our financial planning for the future. Pledges and monthly donations contribute to a regular flow of funds which helps us in planning our programs for youth and families. This provides us with a source of undesignated funds which can be used where they are needed most and promotes long-term sustainability for the organization. Thank you to the following people for their support of vulnerable youth and families into the future.

Kindness for Kids Pledges

Bruce Adams
Chris Baerg
Heather DeForest
Barbara Farmer
Anne Garthshore
Leon Getz
Mark Hainsworth
Calvin Hass
Nancy Hill
Gwen Ingham
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Rachael McKendry
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Elizabeth Williams

Community Group Donations

- BC Provincial Blood Coordinating Office
- BC Yukon Legion
- Beta Sigma Phi, Laureate Zeta
- Burnaby Firefighters Union
- Douglas College
- Elk’s Club of New Westminster
- Marpole Oakridge Community Centre
- New Westminster Firefighters Charitable Society
- Odd Fellows Lodge No. 90
- Provincial Employees Community
- Rotary Women’s Association
- Ulster Association
- West Coast Science Fiction Association

Church Donations

- Anglican Church Women
- Grace Memorial United Church
- Highlands United Church
- Parish of St. Timothy Anglican Church
- St. Francis-in-the-Wood Anglican Church
- St. Mary’s Kerrisdale
- St. Mary’s ACW
- St. Mary’s Embroidery Guild
- St. Philip’s Anglican Church

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- Urban Impact Recycling Ltd.
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- Vancity Branch 14
- Vancity Branch 15
- Wesgroup Properties

"Thank you for everything. When I needed a program and housing plus supports, you guys were there for me."
Thank You To Our
Lead Programming Donors:

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- Face The World Foundation
- Yunnan Foundation
- Westminster Savings Credit Union
- Vancity
- Pacifica Family Addiction Foundation
- John Hardie Mitchell family foundation
- Vancouver Foundation
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- Tzu Chi Foundation Canada
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- All Saints Anglican Church
- BC School for the Deaf
- John Oliver Secondary School Life Skills Program
- Landscape Training Customers
- Marpole Oakridge Community Centre Youth Group
- St. Mark’s Anglican Church
- St. Stephen’s United Church
- Douglas College
- Fraser Health Aboriginal Services
- Oddseye I
- Frontier College
- Circle of Eagles
- Hamber House
- Support Link Overseers/Landlords
- St. John the Evangelist Anglican Church
- Eagle Ridge United Church

Volunteers and Special Friends:

We’d like to thank all of our volunteers, silent auction donors, and those of you who have given items for the youth and moms in our programs or to Aunt Leah’s Urban Thrift Store.

You are too numerous to name here, yet still an important part of the Aunt Leah’s community.

Thank you for your generosity over the past year.

Some interesting volunteer stats:

- Approximately 5 volunteers donated a total of 57.5 hours in the office helping with mail-outs and other supports.
- A total of 333 volunteers donated 2191 hours to our tree lot sales in 2011.
- Aunt Leah’s 9 board members donated 429 hours of service making important decisions and providing integral support to the organization.
- Forty-nine volunteers donated over 200 hours to the Lonely Hearts Club Band Fundraiser.

In 2011, Aunt Leah’s received 74 tickets with the combined value of $2082.92 from Kids Up Front so our youth could enjoy a variety of recreational activities they would not have otherwise been able to experience.

Please make all donations payable to:

Aunt Leah's Society
668 Carnarvon Street, Unit 200,
New Westminster, B.C. V3M 5Y6

To donate online:
www.auntleahs.org

☑ Yes!

I would like to donate!

☐ $35  ☐ $50  ☐ $100  ☐ $200

☐ Another amount ______________

☐ I would like to be a MONTHLY DONOR, hereby authorizing Aunt Leah’s Society to make automatic monthly withdrawals from my bank account or credit card as indicated. I have enclosed a cheque marked “void” or provided my credit card information.

☐ Cheque (made out to Aunt Leah’s Society)  ☐ Visa  ☐ MC

Card # ____________________  Exp. ______

Signature ____________________

☐ My donation is to be anonymous.

For more information, visit:
www.kidsupfrontvancouver.com

Did you know we are a partner agency with Kids Up Front Foundation (Vancouver)? Thanks to Kids Up Front, our kids have the opportunity to experience a variety of sports, recreation and arts & cultural events that otherwise would not be possible. Since 2004, Kids Up Front has been providing quality entertainment and educational experiences to kids and families across Greater Vancouver by redistributing unused event tickets and by creating special events to help heal, bond and unite. Thanks Kids Up Front!
How You Can Help

Aunt Leah’s Independent Lifeskills Society depends on your support to provide programs and services for vulnerable youth and families. Please call us at 604-525-1204 ext 224.

Financial Donations - Make a donation, become a monthly donor or a multi-year pledge donor by calling us today! Karin King kking@auntleahs.org, 604-525-1204 ext 228. Donations can also be made online at www.auntleahs.org

Host a Fundraiser - Host a fundraising event with your friends or co-workers and raise money for Aunt Leah’s. Ask us for our helpful event kit full of tips and suggestions. Karin King, kking@auntleahs.org, 604-525-1204 ext 228

Christmas Tree Lots - Buy a tree at our Burnaby, Vancouver, North Vancouver, or Coquitlam Christmas Tree Lots. Angelina Oates aoates@auntleahs.org, 604-525-1204 ext 232

Lonely Hearts Club Band - Attend our annual music benefit featuring local artists performing their favourite Beatles songs. Trina Bagnall tbagnall@auntleahs.org, 604-525-1204 ext 224

Sponsorship - Promote your business in the community through sponsorship of an event or program. Trina Bagnall tbagnall@auntleahs.org, 604-525-1204 ext 224

Volunteering - Sign up to volunteer at one of our upcoming fundraising events, tree lot locations or to assist with our letter campaigns and mail-outs. We could really use your help! Karry Shaw kshaw@auntleahs.org, 604-525-1204 ext 234

Become an “Aunty” - Host a donor party. Ask your friends to bring gently-used clothing for our Urban Thrift store. Angelina Oates aoates@auntleahs.org, 604-525-1204, ext 232

“My daughter’s feelings of self-worth have skyrocketed. She feels confident in dealing with people, carrying out tasks that are assigned and taking on new challenges.”

“I am so happy that you all at Aunt Leah’s care about my son. He talks very highly of you all. It means so much to me to know that my son is well and safe.”