Our Mission

To build hope and well-being for our most vulnerable citizens through Jesus’ love.
FINDING LIGHT THIS CHRISTMAS
A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

This has been a year like no other, and many of us can’t wait until 2020 is over.

The things we do, how we do them, when we do them, and who we do them with, has all changed. Even as we approach Christmas, we do so with trepidation, wondering if our traditions may also be lost or compromised this year.

Yet, as we look back over millennia, we see the significance of Christmas endure and overcome difficult times. We know that even within the past century, there have been times of darkness much greater than these - the horrors of the First and Second World Wars, the deadly Spanish Flu, the Great Depression - and still Christmas brought a hope and light that diminished the darkness.

Many of us are familiar with the Christmas truce during World War One when, for a brief respite, both sides laid down their weapons, and, in the stillness of that Christmas Eve, sang Silent Night. It’s a testimony to the power of faith and hope, that they can’t be quenched by war, suffering, or a pandemic.

The message of Christmas is the message of Jesus. He is the hope, and His birth forever changed our relationship with the God of the universe. We’re not alone; we’re not abandoned; we’re loved! This is the message we share with everyone who walks through our doors. We desire for them to know that they’re loved by us and by a God that can reach down into their personal darkness and bring light.

May you and your family experience that light this holiday season. Merry Christmas!

Stephen Wile, EdD
Chief Executive Officer

Get wrapped up in the Christmas spirit and help support your vulnerable neighbours this holiday season

Visit 12daysofgiving.ca to learn how you can get involved in this fun initiative with your local Mustard Seed

Mailing Preference: You can choose the amount of mail we send you. If you would like to discuss the type and amount of mail you receive, please contact Donor Relations at 403.269.1319 ext 250 and we would be happy to adjust your mail according to your wishes. Thank you.

The Mustard Seed is a registered Charity in Alberta and British Columbia. #87345 2518 RR0001.

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Medicine Hat: 503 A Allowance Ave SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 3E8 p. 403.615.0548
Gabriel’s struggle with alcohol and drugs began when he was 15 years old. As a shy teenager, he started drinking because it gave him confidence to meet new people. However, his addictions soon got out of control and affected his mental health.

“I drank my way from city to city,” Gabriel says as he frowns at the distant memory. “I thought that by moving I would quit my addictions, but I still got back into drugs and alcohol regardless of where I was, and it always led me to homelessness.”

Determined to change his life, he committed to becoming sober. He came to The Mustard Seed in need of food and support. He was so grateful for the warm meals he received each day, as well as a safe place to spend each night. Being surrounded by other like-minded individuals in a sober environment kept him from falling into old habits.

“The Mustard Seed helped me with everything I needed. They gave me shoes, a winter jacket, and an ID card,” Gabriel explains. “I started volunteering during the day, and the staff were always so nice and helpful. When I started feeling low or down, they brought me back up.”

Gabriel found something else that he didn’t expect – he found Jesus.

“I never had a belief before and having something to believe in kept me going. I found my life started to come together after I had Jesus with me,” Gabriel says.

In addition to Bible studies, The Mustard Seed advocates helped Gabriel find the resources he needed to rebuild his life, including counselling, medical appointments, and housing support. It was an emotional day for Gabriel and for staff when he found out he would be moving into his own apartment.

It’s with a smile that Gabriel expresses his gratitude, “I owe The Mustard Seed my life. This is the first time I’ve been sober in eight years. Everybody is helpful, and it’s a good feeling to know people are rooting for you, that they care and want to see you succeed. I became a new person, and I like the sober me a lot better. I’m so excited.”

Gabriel is a new man and was able to overcome his cycle of homelessness and find permanent housing.

Learn how you can help others like Gabriel by visiting TheSeed.ca

... it’s a good feeling to know people are rooting for you, that they care and want you to succeed.”
Curt found The Mustard Seed just when he needed it most.

Stepping off the bus, he heaved his backpack onto his shoulders and fumbled with the spare change in his pocket. He was alone, unemployed, and had nowhere to go.

“I had everything I owned on my back,” Curt says. “I think I had $1.50 in my pocket by the time I got off the bus.”

Cold and hungry, Curt was in desperate need of a meal and a safe place to spend the night. He remembered someone mentioning The Mustard Seed and started his journey over there.

“By the time I got to The Mustard Seed, it was just in time to register and to get a bus to come to the shelter,” Curt says. “I’m so very glad I did. God led me to The Mustard Seed.”

During his time at the shelter, Curt took advantage of the many different programs and resources offered to him.

“Food, shelter, access to an advocate, access to clean clothes, bedding - a wide variety of things I just normally wouldn’t have gotten just living on the street,” Curt says.

Although Curt is appreciative for all the support he has received, it’s the community he has found at The Mustard Seed that means the most to him.

“The main thing is the friendships that I’ve made here with the staff and the guests,” Curt says fondly. “The Mustard Seed has helped me to become a whole person again and move forward in life.”

Thanks to the continued support of donors, Curt has found encouragement and comfort, even in the midst of a global pandemic. Curt is grateful to everyone who has given him help, recognizing that even the most basic material supports are as important as ever to those experiencing extreme poverty.

“Having three meals is key because it provides nourishment and sustenance to have that energy to go out and do these things that are less than easy right now, especially during the pandemic,” Curt says. “I would hate to think what we would do on the street without these services from The Mustard Seed.”

486 people provided with a safe place to sleep each night in our shelters
Lance quickly learned that The Mustard Seed offered much more than just food. He enrolled in the Men’s Supportive Living Program, which offers supports to overcome challenges like addiction, homelessness and previous incarceration, in order to help men reintegrate into society. The program also offers men like Lance employment skills, access to mental and physical health services, spiritual care, and much more.

Lance admits he was a “hard to handle” kid. He rebelled against his mother and got into trouble with the law, but as he grew older, he knew he wanted to change.

“Thereafter I left reform school and lived with my grandparents, I decided being in trouble with the law wasn’t the kind of life I wanted to live,” Lance says.

Unfortunately, Lance faced an uphill battle. His partner died of an overdose, and he himself was battling addiction, suicidal thoughts, and poor health. He had difficulty holding down a job, and that led him to homelessness. It was at that point he started coming to The Mustard Seed for support.

“I started coming in for meals pretty often, especially when I didn’t have a place to live. I always found myself at the shelter,” Lance says.

Lance is enjoying his improved health and the relationships he has with his roommates at the Supportive Living Program, as well as with the staff. It’s because of your generosity that we’re able to care for our vulnerable neighbours, like Lance, during these harsh winter months.

“I love The Mustard Seed,” Lance says. “It’s not just a name, it’s the people. The staff are so caring, outgoing and friendly. There are already so many people on the streets, and if it wasn’t for The Mustard Seed, you wouldn’t have people here changing their lives.”

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FINDING COMMUNITY & MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS

Kendall longs for the love, security, and community he experienced as a child. Sadly, he’s been out of touch with his family for more than 15 years as a result of his battle with alcoholism. But with your kindness and gifts, he can seek support to rebuild the life and the relationships he once had.

When Kendall reminisces about his childhood, he beams with pride. He was adopted along with his sister into what he describes as a “wonderful upbringing.”

“I want to succeed, I want to reconnect with my family, that’s all I want,” Kendall says. It’s with tears in his eyes that he expresses his ongoing journey to get in touch with his adoptive family, “I love them and I miss them.”

When Kendall visits The Mustard Seed, he comes not just for a meal, but also to catch up with our staff and advocates who are helping him reconnect with his family. He has access to laundry and shower facilities, as well as a fully equipped commercial kitchen that provides daily lunch services and the opportunity to build community.

Kendall talks about the difficulty accessing services around town during the pandemic and how isolating it has been for him. Time spent around other people matters to Kendall, a self-described introvert who admits he doesn’t connect with or talk to people often. But, at The Mustard Seed, Kendall has built relationships with the staff who provide support and encouragement as he rebuilds his life. These visits have become an especially important point of connection.

“I really appreciate this a lot,” Kendall says, looking down at his lunch. “I always put a hedge of protection around people who come through these doors and have these meals. I pray for them.”

503,000+ meals served annually
James will spend this Christmas in a home of his very own. It’s a blessing many of us take for granted. But for James, who has been without a home since his burned down in a devastating wildfire three years ago, it’s truly a gift.

When the wildfire broke out, James fled his home with little more than the clothes on his back.

“It’s terrifying to leave your home behind, not knowing if it will still be there,” James says. “I left everything when I got the evacuation order.”

Unfortunately, his home was destroyed, and James chose to make a fresh start in a new city. Struggling to find a job and a new home, James turned to The Mustard Seed, where your gifts helped him survive. He had access to warm meals and the support he needed to get back on his feet.

The Mustard Seed advocates helped James locate affordable housing options, fill out the necessary applications, and access additional assistance through other agencies. Because of generous donors like you, James now has a home of his own.

“I’m grateful that I’m alive, and that I have my health. I have a place to come to where I have friends and where people treat me like I’m human.”

“I’m grateful that I’m alive, and that I have my health. I have a place to come to where I have friends and where people treat me like I’m human.”

“Your support changed lives.

Your gifts gave James a helping hand when he needed it most. Because of you, he has a home again.

Learn how you can help others like James by visiting TheSeed.ca
# The Mustard Seed’s Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

### March

- **WHO**: declares COVID-19 a pandemic; The Mustard Seed creates an internal COVID-19 Emergency Response committee

- **Launch of the Pandemic Relief Fund** across all cities; overwhelmed with the generosity of thousands of donations in cloth masks and much-needed items from donors

- **State of Emergency** declared in Alberta and British Columbia; implemented COVID-19 screening which included physical-distancing, temperature checks, and contact tracing

- **YYC**: Isolation Centre opens on the second floor of the 102 building with space for 12 individuals

- **YYC**: Secondary shelter opens in partnership with First Alliance Church with space for 120 mats; Foothills shelter supports 235 mats

- **YQF**: Secondary shelter opens in partnership with City Chapel with space for 23 mats; Community Support Centre’s shelter supports 23 mats

- **YKA**: Expands food program with packaged meals for Royal Avenue temporary shelter hosted by Canadian Mental Health Association – averaging 35 meals daily

- **YKA**: Expands food program with launch of Neighbourhood Care Package that includes frozen meal delivery service; prepares for commercial kitchen renovation in order to increase food programming

- **YEG**: Secondary shelter opens in partnership with Trinity Lutheran Church with space for 50 mats and Strathcona Baptist Church for 30 mats

- **YXH**: Expands food program with launch of Neighbourhood Care Package that includes frozen meal delivery service; prepares for commercial kitchen renovation in order to increase food programming

### Location Legend

- **YYC**: Calgary
- **YEG**: Edmonton
- **YQF**: Red Deer
- **YKA**: Kamloops
- **YXH**: Medicine Hat

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*As of time of publication (October 2020), there has been no confirmed cases of COVID-19 at any Mustard Seed location*
Throughout the pandemic, The Mustard Seed has constantly had to respond and adapt to the uncertainties in all our locations throughout Alberta and British Columbia – all with their own unique set of challenges. We have taken diligent action since the initial outbreak to protect both our community and the public by implementing the highest standards of health and safety protocols, guided by Alberta and British Columbia Health Services. Because of your generous support, we were able to maintain operations and essential programming in all five locations.

For more details about our course of action throughout the pandemic, visit TheSeed.ca/Pandemic-Response.
We are thrilled to announce the opening of two thrift stores for The Mustard Seed - one in Edmonton, AB and one in Kamloops, B.C. Beyond offering a great selection of items, both stores will also provide employment opportunities and will help prepare individuals looking to reintegrate into the job market, including guests from The Mustard Seed. This opportunity is crucial for many individuals looking to break their cycle of poverty, gain valuable employment skills and job experience, while also contributing to their community.

“No matter if you’re trying to make ends meet or trying to support your local community, it’s a shopping space for the whole city. Whatever community you’re from, we want you to come here and feel welcome,” says Jocelyn Morrison, Thrift Store Supervisor Edmonton.

Being a second-hand retailer, the thrift stores are open to everyone and offer customers a sustainable shopping option, without sacrificing the dignifying experience of a clean, modern boutique environment. Both stores will offer everything from home goods, to bedding, to trendy clothing, and much more! When you shop at our thrift stores, not only do you get to purchase some amazing items, but you’re also contributing to a greater cause—a purchase with a purpose.

All revenue will support a variety of our programs including a new employment program, which uses employment coaches dedicated to helping people find jobs. Coaches will help clients update their resumes, practice interview skills, and empower individuals to succeed.

As a thank you for your ongoing support, we have included a BOGO coupon that can be used at both the Kamloops or Edmonton location. We can’t wait to see you!

Follow along
#TMSThriftYEG facebook.com/TMSThriftStoreYEG
#TMSThriftYKA facebook.com/TMSThriftStoreYKA

*Limited to one coupon per visit. Coupon must be redeemed at time of purchase. Valid at both Edmonton and Kamloops thrift stores. Expires March 31, 2021.
This has been a year like none other. The pandemic left us all in uncharted territory with many uncertainties. But through all the challenges and changes, one thing remained constant - the faithful support of our incredible communities.

Because of donors like you, we were able to maintain operations and essential programming in all our locations across Alberta and British Columbia. With your help, we received thousands of donations ranging from masks, bottles of water, cleaning supplies, hygiene items, clothing, and much more.

Your gifts helped give our guests a helping hand in times of uncertainty and provided much needed warm meals, access to hot showers, a safe place to sleep, and critical health and wellness services. With your support, we were able to open secondary shelter spaces across Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, and Kamloops. We increased our sanitization, cleaning, and medical protocols, and even opened an Isolation Centre in Calgary. Additionally, we were able to innovative and adapt by offering virtual and over-the-phone supports such as health and wellness appointments, counselling, employment assistance and more. We were able to expand our food programs to cater to even more people in need and even offer takeaway meals – all thanks to your kindness and compassion.

We’re endlessly grateful for all that you have done – for the financial contributions, volunteer hours, prayers, fundraisers and gifts-in-kind, without which we simply could not do the work we do. We’re overwhelmed and our hearts are full with the amount of support we have received this past year from generous people like you. Amazing team efforts unfolded across all of our locations, and we’re reminded daily that we’re one community rallying together to support those experiencing homelessness and extreme poverty.

Visit TheSeed.ca/Appreciation for a full list of gracious community contributions, along with our sincerest thank yous.
Make a Christmas wish come true

Help your neighbours who are hungry and have no place to go

Provide a Christmas meal and refuge from the cold for only $3.51.

Donate today at TheSeed.ca/Winter