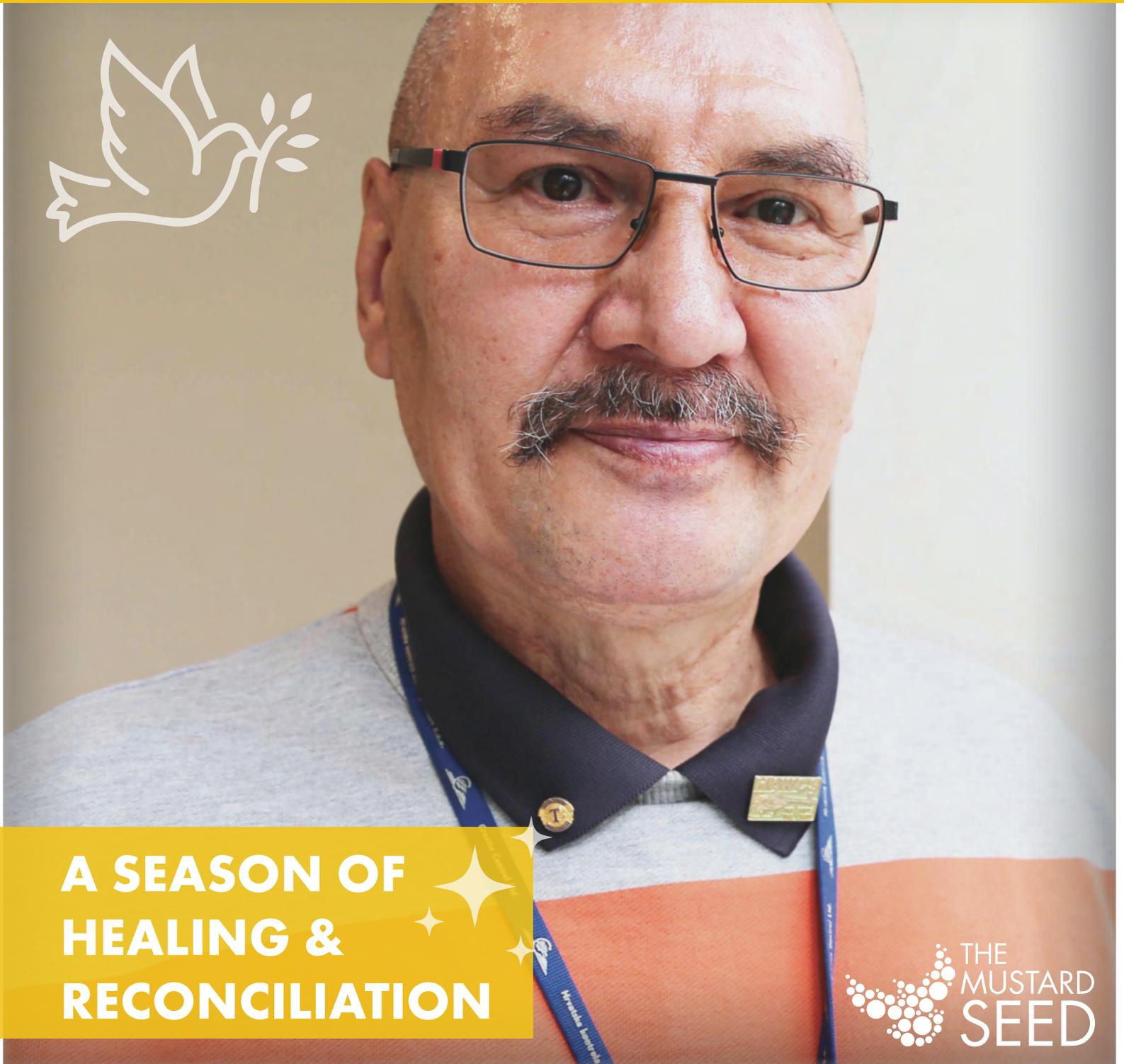


THE MUSTARD SEED

SEED NEWS

WINTER 2021

BUILDING COMMUNITY. GROWING HOPE. SUPPORTING CHANGE.



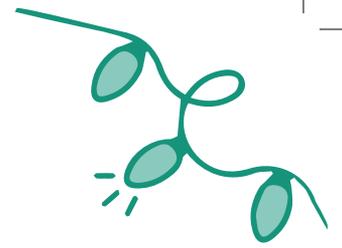
**A SEASON OF
HEALING &
RECONCILIATION**



CALGARY | EDMONTON | RED DEER | KAMLOOPS | MEDICINE HAT



Steve Wile
CEO of The Mustard Seed



A Season of Hope

A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Gratitude is the word that comes to my mind when thinking of this past year. Harvard Health Publishing reports that “gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness.” It’s the thankful appreciation for what an individual receives, and with gratitude people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. What a powerful motivation for us to be thankful. In this season of giving, I can identify a few of the many ways we’re thankful:

- God’s grace and protection over our clients; none of our clients passed away due to COVID-19.
- The ability to serve those experiencing homelessness by adding 500 more mats during the pandemic and housing more than 225 vulnerable individuals.
- The incredible financial support we received from each of you to aid in our vision and mission.

Hopefully this will be a source of joy and happiness for you as you recognize your role in what we have accomplished together! May God bless you and your loved ones this season.

Stephen Wile, EdD
Chief Executive Officer

**Read this
newsletter's
stories of hope
and the power
of your support!**

Scan the QR code
below with the
camera on your
mobile device.



OUR VISION

To eliminate homelessness and reduce poverty where we serve.



OUR MISSION

To build hope and well-being for our most vulnerable citizens through Jesus’ love.



OUR VALUES

- Christ-Centredness
- Transparent Accountability
- Treating All With Respect
- Open Communication
- Holistic Innovation

**“I will give thanks
to you, LORD,
with all my heart;
I will tell of all your
wonderful deeds.”**

—Psalm 9:1



The Mustard Seed
Donation Processing Centre
102 11 Ave SE, Calgary, AB T2G 0X5

To save on costs and help more people, all donations are processed through our central location. Your donation will stay in your local community and city.



Mailing Preference: You can choose the amount of mail we send you. If you'd like to discuss the type and amount of mail you receive, please contact Donor Relations at 1.877.731.7333 or email DonorRelations@theseed.ca, 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.
#87453 2518 RR0001.



Privacy Statement: When you become a financial supporter of The Mustard Seed, you entrust us with your personal information. This information will only be used to 1) Establish your identity in order to send out a tax-deductible receipt for your donation, 2) Include your name on our mailing list. Your information isn't shared outside the organization. We value you, our donors, and respect your privacy.



Cori, Food Services Team Lead



A Taste for Family

YOUR GIFTS PROVIDE MORE THAN JUST A MEAL

For over five years, Kurt has been a regular, smiling face at The Mustard Seed in Red Deer. He often describes his time here as "very peaceful" and enjoys catching up with his friends and The Mustard Seed staff. Once a business owner and president of a community association, Kurt was forced to stop working due to a serious medical condition. It was at this time that he realized he needed help to get through multiple hardships.

Kurt never imagined he'd end up having to access The Mustard Seed's services.

"There's a lot of people in the same position," Kurt says. "They never thought they would ever end up in the position where they would need a meal. And it hurts the pride, but it's a service there if you do need it - thank God it's there for people like me."

Because of your generosity, Kurt has access to nutritious meals - which he notes, the "quality has been outstanding."

"People don't really think too much about their dietary needs when they're desperate to eat anything that's put in front of them. But when you finally got a salad, some fruit, and a good meal - that's the one thing about The Mustard Seed the meals have just been healthy and fantastic."

Though to Kurt, it's more than a meal. "It's emotionally comforting. It brings a little bit of routine in your life, a little bit of consistency."

Despite the challenges he faces, Kurt does what he can to ensure he continues to have a positive impact on his community. "I have a big yard, so I donate a lot of my produce to The Mustard Seed."

"The last time I went in, I took in a bunch of zucchini and squash, it ended up being 88 pounds," he says. "It's just going to rot on me, there's no way I can eat that much, so I take that in, and it feels good that I can feed people - I'm giving back."



In 2020, over 501,000 meals were served across all Mustard Seed locations.

The Mustard Seed's Gifts of Hope Catalogue

GIVE A GIFT WITH PURPOSE
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON



The **Gifts of Hope Catalogue** empowers you to choose where you want your donation to go.

Every gift makes a difference for those experiencing homelessness and poverty in any of the following program areas:



Health & Wellness



Employment



Food & Security



Children & Families

There are so many wonderful ways to make an impact and change a life in a way that means the most to you!

Child Psychoeducational Assessment

Many children experiencing poverty struggle due to undiagnosed learning disabilities. The cost of diagnosis is out of reach for many low-income families. You can contribute to a professional psychoeducational assessment for a child in need.

Indigenous Programming

You can help rebuild a foundation of tradition, community, and culture. The Mustard Seed provides a culturally appropriate and inclusive space for Indigenous clients to feel heard, accepted, and celebrated.

Reintegration Support

Everyone's road to recovery looks different; especially for those who have been incarcerated. This program helps former inmates secure safe housing, begin working with an employment coach, and begin to give back to society in a meaningful way. You can give the gift of a second chance.

Visit [TheSeed.ca/Gift-Catalogue](https://www.theseed.ca/gift-catalogue) to explore all the unique opportunities available and give a gift with purpose today!



Use the hashtag **#TMSgiftsofhope** and share with us why you chose to give a gift with purpose to The Mustard Seed. We would love to hear from you!

'Tis the Season of Giving

SHARE YOUR BLESSINGS WITH YOUR VULNERABLE NEIGHBOURS

The holiday season at The Mustard Seed is our time of greatest need. We have many unique ways to give that can provide more than a meal and shelter – your gifts can also give love, hope, and joy!

For more information and for even more opportunities in your city, please visit TheSeed.ca.

All Cities: AB - Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, and Medicine Hat; BC - Kamloops.

Giving Tuesday

Giving Tuesday harnesses the generosity of people like you. You can partner with us as a social media ambassador, a matching gift partner, volunteer, donor, or fundraiser. This year, your donation will be matched by our generous presenting sponsor, Fairfield Watson.

12 Days of Giving

Every day of this incredible 12-day event provides an opportunity for you to give much-needed support for your local Mustard Seed that covers a variety of programs and services.

Christmas Meals

For \$3.51, you can provide a delicious Christmas meal to someone who otherwise wouldn't have one. A meal is more than just something to fill their bellies – it's also a gift of hope and love.

The Gifts of Hope Catalogue

The Gifts of Hope Catalogue empowers you to make a direct impact on a program or service that means the most to you - give a gift with purpose this holiday season.

Winter Wish List

Consider donating urgently-needed items over the long winter months that are in high demand in your city for your vulnerable neighbours.

Volunteer!

All our locations desperately need volunteers like you to continue supporting those in need. We have implemented high levels of health and safety protocols in order to make you and our community feel at ease. Please consider giving your time this holiday season, we can't do this without you.

Family Gift Centre – Edmonton

The Mustard Seed provides a special place for low-income families to come and purchase new toys for their children for \$2 per gift. Donate a new, unwrapped toy for children ages up to 18 years old or give financially.

Shop with a Purpose - Kamloops | Edmonton

As you buy your gifts, please consider shopping at our Thrift Stores. They sell everything from home goods, to trendy clothing, and much more. Not only do you get to purchase some amazing items for gifts, but you're also contributing to a great cause! See the coupon below for a special discount.



**Buy One item and
Get One item of equal
or lesser value for FREE.**

**BO
GO**

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. Furniture not included in this offer.
Expires March 31, 2022.

Kamloops
346 Seymour St, Kamloops, BC

Edmonton
6527 118 Ave, Edmonton, AB



George, client at The Mustard Seed

From Surviving to Thriving

THANK YOU FOR HELPING GEORGE FIND A HOME

George has been a part of The Mustard Seed family for a remarkable 23 years. He has grown tremendously during his time here and tells us "a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step."

Originally from the Northwest Territories, George grew up living off the land with his family, hunting, fishing, and trading furs as their way of living.

Seeking a new adventure, he enlisted in the Canadian Forces. After serving for a commendable seven years, "I decided I'd give Calgary a go," he says. However, George's move to Calgary wasn't the smoothest transition and he struggled with homelessness. He found The Mustard Seed and stayed for three meals that first day. He ended up spending the night in the Foothills Emergency Shelter, launching his journey with The Mustard Seed. Since that day, George has been a part of The Mustard Seed legacy. He was accepted to live in the 1010 Centre, The Mustard Seed's permanent supportive housing.

George's compassion is undeniable and quite inspiring when you learn that George was also a student at Inuvik's Sir Alexander Mackenzie Residential School.

Growing up, he (along with his siblings) were sent away 10 months out of the year with no contact with his family.

"My parents didn't really talk about it much – I guess to them it was the best chance I had at life, was to try and learn to read and write, and get some schooling. That way you could find your own way in life."

He explained to us that this was the way of life at the time and you couldn't do anything about it so "you learnt to accept it." It was a hard and difficult time but George doesn't let these dark times define him. Although he has suffered from his past, his calm and caring demeanor makes everyone around him feel comfortable, building up those around him in the 1010 Centre who need acceptance.

"I try to be still and be calm, and still be reflective in a way towards others – letting them know I have compassion in my heart. Without compassion, how can we distinguish ourselves from beasts?"



In 2020, your support helped over 385 people move off the streets and into permanent, affordable housing.

Walking Alongside our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters

INDIGENOUS PROGRAMS PROMOTE WELLNESS THROUGH CULTURE

This has been an especially hard year for our Indigenous communities. With the heartbreaking discoveries found at Residential Schools across the country, it has been a year of healing and reconciliation. Canadian Heritage Minister, Steven Guilbeault, says the events unfolded from this year have given a chance for Canadians to learn about and reflect on a dark chapter in their country's history and to commemorate the survivors, their families and their communities, as called for by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Indigenous leaders.

Oppression, discrimination, and intergenerational trauma have all contributed to this and made it vital that The Mustard Seed offers culturally appropriate supports. Our Indigenous programs were developed to ensure culturally appropriate supports are available to help the Indigenous population, who are often subject to intersecting vulnerabilities and marginalization. The program incorporates cultural practices, traditions, and activities into the therapeutic process.

For more information on any of these programs, please visit TheSeed.ca.

In 2020, 828 hours of Indigenous counselling was provided.



Over 270 clients took part in Indigenous wellness activities.

INDIGENOUS WELLNESS PROGRAM

This Calgary program is run by Randi Sager who is Lakota / Nêhiyaw from Okotoks, AB, and is a member of the Muscowpetung Salteaux Nation in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan.

"Clients who have never engaged in their culture before are able to do so in a safe welcoming space within the Indigenous Wellness Program," Randi says. "The Indigenous Wellness Program promotes wellness and healing through cultural engagement. By doing so, it strengthens one's sense of community, cultural identity, spirituality and empowerment."

In addition to individual and group therapy, clients participate in traditional activities such as ribbon skirt making, drum making and drum circles, beading and more.

THE GATHERING PLACE

This Kamloops program has partnered with the Aboriginal Friendship Society and the City of Kamloops to create an outdoor area for individuals to rest, relax, and receive services with dignity in a culturally safe space. Clients receive basic needs items such as clothing and hygiene items, as well as support from outreach workers who provide referrals to housing, treatment programs, and more. The project also provides individuals with the opportunity to take part in Indigenous cultural activities, such as ceremonies, smudging, and teaching from Elders.

Indigenous clients account for 30-40% of The Mustard Seed's clients.

Meet Gabbie

HOW YOUR GENEROSITY
HAS CHANGED HER WORLD



Q: Hi Gabbie! Tell us a little bit about yourself.

A: I am 63 years old and I was born and raised in Calgary but moved to Edmonton later in life.

Q: What did your life look like growing up?

A: My childhood was a bit rocky because I was the black sheep of the family. That is the only way I can describe it. I experienced abuse from my own family members at a very young age. Then I got a boyfriend and married at a tender age and before I knew it, children came into play.

What can I say, my adulthood has been a struggle. I worked as a cook for many years. My common-law was extremely abusive, financially, emotionally and physically. One day I had enough and left at 52 years old and came to Edmonton!

At some point in my life, I got depressed because of a spine injury, I couldn't walk but rather crawl to reach the bathroom. I was diagnosed with multiple diseases. I had nerve pains, arthritis, anxiety, and mental issues to mention but a few. I started drinking alcohol sporadically. I sat alone. My family didn't help at all. I couldn't sleep or walk properly and I gave up on myself.

Q: How did you first hear about The Mustard Seed?

A: I was living a few blocks away from Mosaic Centre in Edmonton. I was walking and I reached the centre, asked if they needed any volunteers at the time. Staff member called Kristie told me what The Mustard Seed does under Mosaic Centre.

Q: Why did you choose to come to The Mustard Seed?

A: It was a little gathering place that had a welcoming environment. I needed to cry to someone and I talked to a counsellor.

Q: What programs and services have you accessed at The Mustard Seed?

A: Quite a few! I use the E-closet where I get access to clothes and hygiene supplies. Counselling services, housing services and advocates who helped me apply for income support and things like my ID and health care card. I have stayed at the The Mustard Seed's south side shelter.

Q: What does your day look like at the shelter?

A: I always get my own time in the shelter just to think about life and how I can better myself. I go out of the shelter and walk around a few blocks then I come back as I please. Time goes by so fast in the day. I paint sometimes or crochet. The shelter gave me a temporary place to stay and the staff are trying so hard to connect me to housing, I'm hopeful I will have a place of my own soon.

In the mean time, the shelter is where I get all my positives. Staff greet you everyday and ask how your night went. They say "I hear you had a bad night, how are you feeling today?" This makes a big difference and it's why I love it here.

Q: What does the support from The Mustard Seed mean to you?

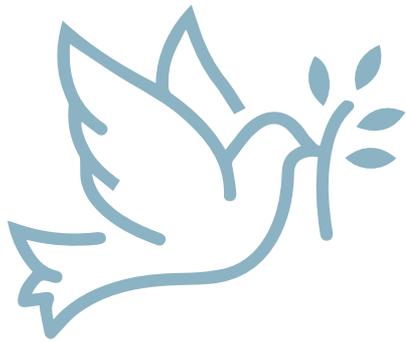
"In simple terms, it means the world to me. Just hearing words like everything is going to be ok is just enough. You have no idea how much it means to know someone out there is helping me. It heals my heart."

Q: Anything else you would like to share about what life looks like for you now?

A: I am a 63 year old and I no longer drink alcohol. I'm viewing a few places and hope I can start cooking my own food and feel normal again. I know my future is bright!

The Hands and Feet of Jesus

HEALING SPIRITUALLY AND PHYSICALLY



John, client at The Mustard Seed

Ten years ago, John was diagnosed with Asperger's syndrome. Now in his 50s, he found himself at the hospital after needing some assistance. Upon discharge last January, he determined that his previous living situation was not a healthy option for him.

Moving into a motel on the outskirts of downtown, he struck up a conversation with his neighbour from across the hall. The chat turned to The Mustard Seed in Kamloops, where he was reminded that the Outreach Centre offered meals, shelter, and health and wellness supports.

John first began eating regularly at the Outreach Centre, where he opened himself up to learn more about what The Mustard Seed offers. Having a multiple meals throughout the day allowed John to focus on beginning to heal from the inside out.

A devoted Christian, John engages in religious discussions with the staff. They encourage him to talk or write about his feelings, something John says help him connect with God and brings him inner peace.

"As I'm living it, this is a part of life I couldn't avoid. A part of God's plan, so I can't be annoyed," John writes.

Continuing conversations at the Outreach Centre and discussing proactive measures for his health with counsellors each week, John is doing his best to make sure that he and others around him stay on the right track.

"I thought I was at the bottom of my barrel before I came here. These people showed me that I wasn't. Just because you're homeless, doesn't mean you're hopeless. I want to show others that they can feel the same way."

“

My faith and mental health were really strained before I arrived at The Mustard Seed. But I began conversing with the facilitators there and they welcomed me. They showed me love and that I don't have to be ashamed to be here. They want to help people get to the next day, however that may be.

”

In 2020, over 55,000 health and wellness services were provided across all Mustard Seed locations.

How Your Support Continues to Bring Hope

EDMONTON – NEW MOSAIC CENTRE

The Mosaic Centre has been a safe, welcoming refuge for those experiencing poverty in North Edmonton for more than 10 years.

With our newly renovated facility, we can serve even more of our friends and neighbours. At more than three times the size of our old location, a complete renovation was in order. This was no small task and we prayed for a solution.

Our donors were instrumental in helping us renovate, bring the building up to code, and furnish the entire space.

It's because of your unwavering support that we were able to create a community space, advocacy hub, and commercial kitchen. The full commercial kitchen has been outfitted with ovens, gas stove tops, freezers, fridges, prep spaces, and more. This will allow us to host collective kitchens, dinner clubs, and programs to help teach both kids and adults about cooking.

The community and advocacy hubs include offices for our advocates to meet one-on-one with community members and a larger, open space that will serve as a place for the community to come together and connect. We're excited to be able to offer programs such as youth nights, coffee connect groups, employment support, afterschool drop-in programs, and much more! By providing these vital supports to low-income individuals and families in North Edmonton, we're thrilled that the Mosaic Centre can help alleviate poverty and serve a larger demographic than ever before!

We could not have done this without the kindness, generosity, and support of our amazing donors – thank you!



Mural in New Mosaic Centre in Edmonton

10



New Community Kitchen in Medicine Hat

MEDICINE HAT – NEW COMMUNITY KITCHEN

According to Alberta Health Services, nearly 1 in 10 households in Alberta experience food insecurity.

When The Mustard Seed expanded its operations to Medicine Hat in 2019, the need to feed the vulnerable population was one of our main priorities. However, we required a larger space and a functioning kitchen to meet the demand. We prayed for a miracle and relied on the support of the community to make our vision come to fruition.

Through hard work and faith, our prayers were answered when many incredible and generous donors stepped up to support our vision.

This was so much more than providing a place to eat - this would continue to feed the community for years to come and always be a place of hope for those who need it. Because of the dedication of the numerous volunteers, our renovations were completed with doors opening to the community on April 19, 2021.

Today, The Mustard Seed Community Centre provides over 700 meals per week, operating two meal services each day for anyone in need of something to eat.

We recognize how incredibly fortunate we are for the support of our donors, partners, and community members. We look forward to continuing to feed and help build hope and well-being for our vulnerable population and thank those for their compassion and commitment to eliminating homelessness and reducing poverty.

Shining a Light on Our Community Partners



THANK YOU FOR BUILDING COMMUNITY.
GROWING HOPE. SUPPORTING CHANGE.

GlowStone Lighting

We're truly fortunate to be partnered with a wonderful local business, GlowStone Lighting! They believe that everyone should "love coming home" and everything they do as a company revolves around that simple idea.

In October 2020, GlowStone Lighting graciously donated their high-quality lighting system to our Calgary location and outfitted our downtown building in beautiful, customizable LED lights. But to Jason, President of GlowStone Lighting, they're more than just lights - they're a way to connect with his friends, family, and community.

"I'm almost always looking for a way to talk to my daughters, so that we can have conversations that aren't just 'My dad talking to me again' you know? If I'm saying to them, 'Oh yeah we're putting the lights up blue and yellow tonight because it's the Coldest Night of the Year' - it's an opportunity for us to understand and recognize that there are families that don't have a place to stay tonight."

And that's why it's important for GlowStone Lighting to do what they could to support our organization, including sponsoring our 12 Days of Giving!

"Let's make your home something where you can say 'Yeah, I love coming home to my lights, not just because they're beautiful, not just because I never have to hang lights again, but also because I help support The Mustard Seed,'" Jason says. "I imagine that there are a lot of people who come home that are so thankful that they had an interaction with The Mustard Seed because of the home they're in now. And we want that same feeling of 'You may not have needed the services of The Mustard Seed, but you understand the importance of it.'"

We're grateful to have GlowStone Lighting as a partner and we want to give them a huge thank you for helping us illuminate hope in our communities! They want to help your family as well with a special offer - please visit GlowStoneLighting.com/GivingSeed.



JLL and Rogers Insurance

Over the past four years, we've had the tremendous honour of having two important sponsors be the driving force behind The Mustard Seed galas in Calgary - JLL and Rogers Insurance.

While their tenure is coming to an end, their impact and influence will live on indefinitely in the lives of the individuals and families who been given a second chance. Through their leadership and dedication, we have raised nearly \$2 million at the last three galas for those experiencing homelessness and poverty. We're forever grateful to the contributions of JLL and Rogers Insurance - thank you from the bottom of our hearts!



The Mustard Seed Annual Gala



GlowStone Lighting

Help your neighbours who
are hurting, give **hope** today.

Just **\$3.51** can make
a Christmas miracle.



Donate today at TheSeed.ca/Winter



TheSeed.ca

CALGARY

p. 403.269.1319 | e. Info@theseed.ca

EDMONTON

p. 780.426.5600 | e. InfoEdmonton@theseed.ca

RED DEER

p. 403.347.1844 | e. InfoRedDeer@theseed.ca

KAMLOOPS

p. 250.434.9898 | e. InfoKamloops@theseed.ca

MEDICINE HAT

p. 403.866.7542 | e. InfoMedicineHat@theseed.ca

The Mustard Seed is a Christian non-profit organization that has been caring for individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty since 1984. Operating in five cities across Alberta and British Columbia, The Mustard Seed is a supportive haven where people can have their physical, mental, and spiritual needs met and grow toward greater health and independence. We've been an agent of change for more than three decades, thanks to our donors, volunteers, and support from the community.

Today, The Mustard Seed operates in multiple cities including: Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer, and Medicine Hat in Alberta; and Kamloops in British Columbia. For a full list of all our locations, please visit TheSeed.ca/contact-us and choose your city from the dropdown menu under "View Location:".

We hope to hear from you soon!