



BANFF AVENUE COMMUNITY HOUSE

COVID - 19

COMMUNITY RESPONSE

STAYING CONNECTED

Using a telephone for its original intended purpose might seem old school in the days of FaceTime, Zoom and text, but it has proven to be a very effective way to keep connections strong in the Banff-Ledbury community. The staff at Banff Avenue Community House can attest to the fact that sometimes, simpler is better. Using the telephone to reach community members has been a straight-forward way to see how youth and parents alike are managing during the pandemic, as well as way to provide information and support where it is most needed.



Telephone calls are not the only way Banff Avenue Community House is reaching out to their neighbours. Regular door step visits, communication flyers, community newsletters and sharing of Covid-19 related material are other ways they are keeping their neighbours informed and connected in the community. However, the weekly telephone calls have by far been the most personal and engaging way for both community members and Community House staff to stay connected.

Being able to speak with someone on the phone, especially during a time when voices are obstructed by masks; it is a comfortable and safe way to say hello, offer support and to feel the emotions come through especially for those who are feeling alone, anxious, or isolated. This was so true for one of our neighbours, Jane.

Jane, a mother of 6 children with a baby on the way, was hospitalized around the most recent lockdown. The Community House staff were able to learn of this development through the regular phone calls to her cellphone. It was very evident that Jane was overwhelmed and anxious about being able to manage with so many challenges. This direct contact gave staff clear direction on how they could provide support to Jane, by contacting the children's caregiver and arranging for delivery of food, activity kits and baby items to the home. They continued to stay connected with Jane throughout her three-week stay at the hospital and were happy to welcome her and her baby boy back home.

Although the community looks very different during the pandemic, the Community House staff are proud that they have continued to foster the true meaning of community by staying connected and supporting each other.

WELLNESS CHECKS

To increase positive mental health, Community House staff made **3,540** connections with residents by phone or door step visits

HOME LEARNING SUPPORTS

To increase engagement of vulnerable children, the Community House staff delivered over **1,000** educational activity kits

FACE MASK DISTRIBUTION

To reduce barriers to participation, the Community House distributed over **2,000** masks

FOOD SECURITY

Having access to essentials such as food services meant Banff Avenue Community House never closed their doors. They immediately adapted to preparing hampers and setting appointments for ease and safe access to nutritional food and any wrap around supports needed for their neighbours

Strong collaborative work with the Ottawa Foodbank, Ottawa Network for Education (ONFE) and the City's Human Needs Task Force (HNTF), have enabled the Banff Avenue Community House to meet the increased, complex needs of the community over the last year.



3,124

Food Bank Encounters



344

Individuals accessed the weekly Fresh Produce Program



460

Student Meal Replacement Kits distributed



SUPPORTING CHILDREN & YOUTH

Supporting the mental well-being and academic success of Banff-Ledbury's children and youth has remained a priority throughout the pandemic.

Pre-pandemic critical hours programs, which saw 50+ children and youth a day walk through the doors, shifted into a hybrid support system for children and youth. This included Homework Clubs, virtual tutoring, Youth Council, Summer Camps and the Door Step Program (visits, activity kits).

A 3 Phase Service Delivery Model set a framework for offering safe and responsive children and youth programs and supports, regardless of changing provincial and/or local restrictions. This model ensured the Community House was able to adapt quickly with little to no disruption in programming.



58 children aged 4-12yrs engaged in programs



29 youth aged 13-18yrs engaged in programs

THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE

The Banff Avenue Community House strives to provide community-informed placed-based programs and services. In addition to ongoing community check-ins, the staff plan outreach and engagement activities to identify community needs and prioritize actions.

In 2020, the large annual Community Prioritizing event was replaced with Virtual Community Chats. Even though the format was very different, this vital community process helped to establish the 2021 goals.

100% of respondents reported being satisfied with the activities/services

96% of respondents reported participation at the Community House was beneficial

98% of respondents reported feeling more connected to their community as a result of participating

**Based on 31 Client Satisfaction Surveys 2020*

COMMUNITY REACH: The Community House connected with 100% of households