



**Homelessness Society**  
*of the Bow Valley*

**ANNUAL REVIEW:  
*A YEAR OF GROWTH***

**2022-2023**

The Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley (HSBV) acknowledges that we currently reside, work and play within the Treaty 7 territory that is traditionally the territory of the Stoney Nakoda Nations, the Blackfoot Confederacy, and the Tsuut'ina. We acknowledge the long lasting and harmful issues associated with colonization, and we extend our gratitude to the many Indigenous peoples who share their traditional knowledge and wisdom of the land.

HSBV is dedicated to being an active and educated ally to aid in the reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and prioritize equity, diversity and inclusion within our work, programs, practices, and operations.

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HSBV would like to extend a note of gratitude to the Town of Canmore for partnering with us as our fiscal agent, and for providing HSBV with a space to rent for our 2022/2023 emergency winter shelter program. Additionally, HSBV would like to thank the Canmore Rotary Club Charitable Foundation who has graciously supported us by providing the resources necessary to process community donations and provide charitable tax receipts on our behalf while HSBV works toward charity status.

HSBV would also like to acknowledge and thank our shelter guests who took the time to share their experiences, thoughts and feedback with us. It is through such conversations that HSBV can continue to grow, learn, and offer effective programs.

HSBV's team, both volunteers and staff, have been the heartbeat of our programming and initiatives. It is through the hard work, passion and dedication of our team that HSBV is able to successfully fill a need within the Bow Valley community.

We would finally like to acknowledge and extend our sincerest gratitude to our donors, partners, and community members who have continued to support HSBV. Thank you for your patience, passion and support. We are stronger as a community.

Dear Partners and Supporters,

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to our annual review for the 2022-2023 year. As Chair of HSBV, I would like to extend a warm note of gratitude to all of you for your unwavering support and dedication to our cause.

This year has been a truly successful one for us, with several significant achievements which have allowed us to expand our services to reach people in need and provide them with necessary shelter and support. None of this would have been possible without the hard work and commitment of our partners, donors, community members, volunteers, and staff. Your tireless efforts have made a real difference in the lives of so many people who are struggling to find a place to call home.

As we look forward to the year ahead, we are excited about the potential growth opportunities. We plan to build on our successes by continuing to innovate, collaborate, and expand our reach. We remain committed to our mission of supporting and advocating for individuals without shelter in the Bow Valley. We are confident that with your continued support, we can make a meaningful difference in the lives of even more people.

Once again, thank you for your support, and we look forward to working together towards a brighter future for all.

Sincerely,

**Sarah Lonz**  
Board Chair



**Sarah Lonz**  
*Board Chair*



**Elle West**  
*Vice-Chair*



**Lisa Brown**  
*Treasurer*



**Sachiho Miller**  
*Secretary*



**Lynda Damen**  
*Board Member*



**Amanda Loates**  
*Board Member*

"As a long time Bow Valley resident, I have witnessed and understand first hand the growing concerns regarding homelessness and housing insecurity within our community. Having been involved in the early phases of the Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley (formerly REST program), I am pleased to see how the organization has grown and evolved into what it is today. The Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley plays a critical role in filling a clear need within our community. I encourage continued support by the community for the organization and their vitally important mission."

**Sean Krausert**  
**Mayor, Town of Canmore**

"The diversity and breadth of need in the Bow Valley continues to increase with each passing year; BOWDA certainly saw the growing numbers of those who are unhoused or at risk of being in a situation where a warm bed is uncertain. Access to housing is a fundamental need and basic human right; we found great alignment with the HSBV to help begin to better address these needs in our greater community. Nobody should be left out in the cold and so BOWDA could not have been more pleased to partner with HSBV and select them as our charity of choice for 2022/23."

**Ian O'Donnell**  
**Executive Director, BOWDA**

"The work of the Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley is critical to those who are experiencing housing instability. HSBV not only provides a warm, emergency shelter and a network of support and resources for vulnerable community members, they also act as a voice, an advocate, and the critical first step in the housing continuum. Across the Bow Valley, we are fortunate that we have a community who takes care of each other; The Wim & Nancy Pauw Foundation is proud to support the essential work of HSBV."

**Cathy Geisler**  
**Executive Director, Wim & Nancy Pauw Foundation**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	02
<b>Letter from the Chair</b>	03
<b>Notes of Support</b>	05
<b>Executive Summary</b>	07
<b>Mission &amp; Vision</b>	08
<b>History</b>	09
<b>Year of Growth</b>	10
<i>Donor Growth</i>	11
<i>Partner Growth</i>	11
<i>Awareness Growth</i>	14
<i>Team Growth</i>	15
<b>Program Review &amp; Feedback</b>	16
<i>Emergency Winter Shelter</i>	18
<i>Outreach Program</i>	19
<i>Guest Feedback</i>	21
<i>Partner Feedback</i>	23
<i>Staff Feedback</i>	24
<i>Volunteer Feedback</i>	25
<i>Feedback Summary</i>	26
<b>A Look Ahead</b>	28
<b>Conclusions</b>	29
<b>Appendices</b>	30
<i>Appendix A</i>	31
<i>Appendix B</i>	32
<i>Appendix C</i>	34
<i>Appendix D</i>	36

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In March 2023, HSBV celebrated one year of becoming an official, non-profit society. Within that year, HSBV has seen incredible progress.

2022/2023 marked the third consecutive year of operating our local, low-barrier emergency winter shelter, and was the longest operating period to date. HSBV's low-barrier, emergency winter shelter operated from December 15th, 2022 to the morning of April 1st, 2023. Through the emergency winter shelter, individuals experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity had access to a safe, warm, and inclusive space to seek rest and other supports during the coldest months of the year.

**During the 108 nights the emergency winter shelter was open, 30 individuals accessed the space for an average of 2.3 guests per night and a total of 263 bed nights.**

HSBV's Annual Report is based on information collected through the emergency shelter operating period, guest feedback sessions, staff feedback, volunteer feedback and community partner feedback. This Annual Review addresses both the emergency winter shelter program and the outreach program, highlights our partners and generous donors, and outlines long-term organizational goals.

Increased use and access to HSBV programs emphasizes the continued, growing concerns related to homelessness and housing insecurity within the Bow Valley. As an organization with the goal of providing local emergency supports to those community members in need, HSBV's team has and will continue to build connections within the community, fundraise in order to continue offering our emergency programs, advocate for those experiencing homelessness, and establish compassionate awareness within our community.

# MISSION

Our mission is to provide local, community-based, wrap around support for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability within the Bow Valley.

## WE BELIEVE . . .

1

That housing is a basic right.

2

That anyone experiencing homelessness in the Bow Valley should have access to safe accommodation and supports.

3

In the importance of having community-based, wrap-around supports and services.

4

In diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Collaboration between Town of Canmore and Homeless 2 Housing Coalition
- REST Program pilot at St. Michael's Anglican Church
- Provided 104 bed nights
- 17 total guests

**2020-  
2021**

## **A LOOK BACK AT WHERE WE STARTED**

**2021-  
2022**

- 6 Board of Directors elected in December 2021
- Official society in March 2022
- Reopened Shelter Program & kickstarted Outreach Program
- Provided 366 bed nights
- 28 total guests

# 2022 - 2023

served as a year of growth and development for HSBV in all facets:



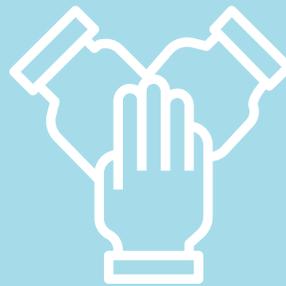
**Donors**



**Partners**



**Awareness**

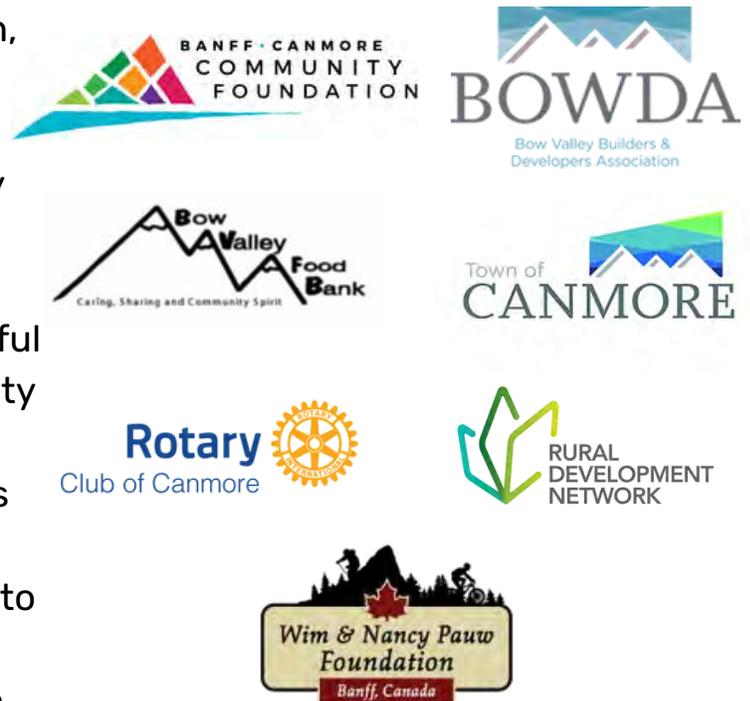


**Team**

# DONOR GROWTH

For the 2022/2023 operating season, HSBV was incredibly fortunate to receive generous donations from various new and existing community partners and organizations.

Additionally, HSBV is sincerely grateful for our private donors, and community members who participated in and donated to HSBV through Canmore's first ever Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) event. HSBV is also thankful to the Anglican Church Women of the Diocese of Calgary for their donation of gift cards.



# PARTNER GROWTH

A special note of gratitude to those organizations who continue to support HSBV programs, act as partners, and serve as leaders in creating a safe and inclusive Bow Valley community:

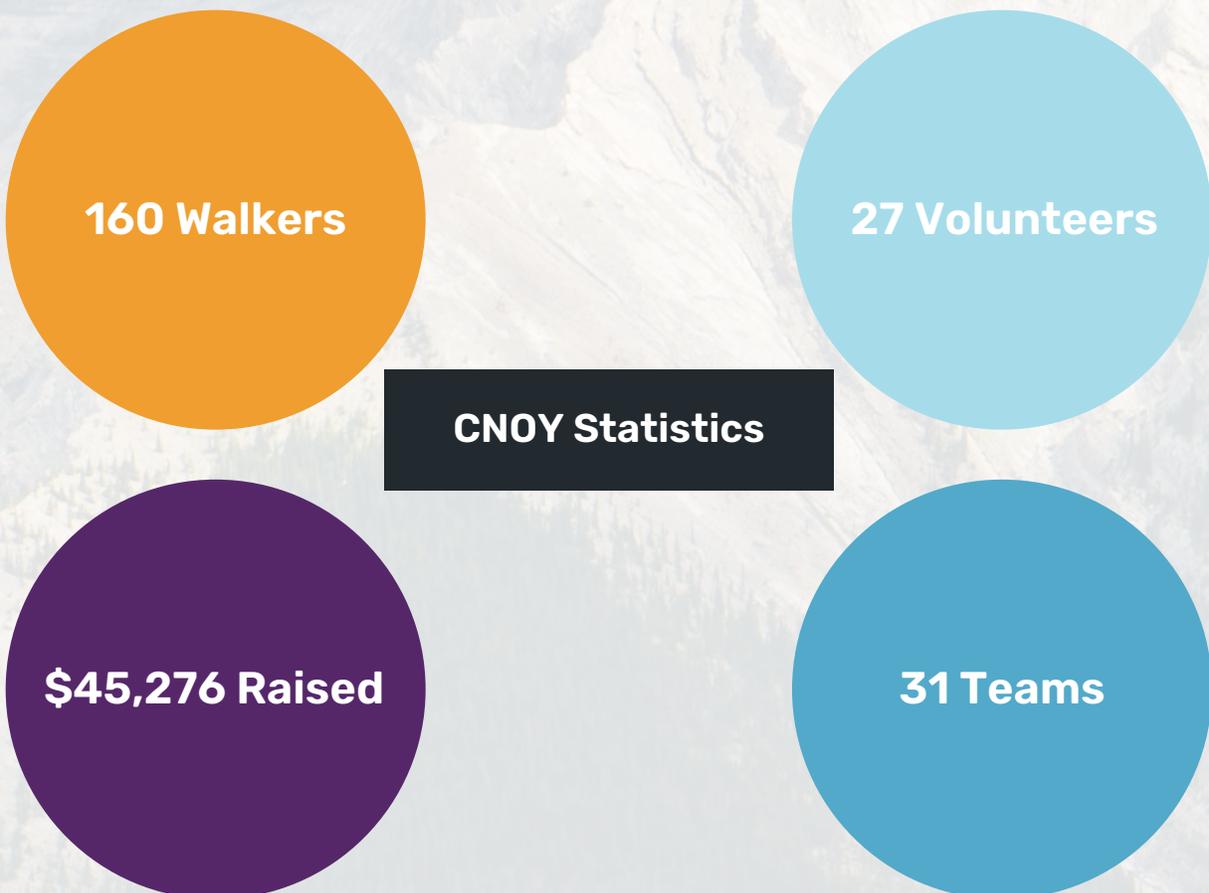
- Alberta Health Services
- Banff Hospital
- Bow Valley Food Bank
- Bow Valley Food Alliance
- Bow Valley Regional Housing
- Canmore Hospital
- Canmore Hotel Hostel
- Canmore Community Housing
- Canmore Rotary Club Charitable Foundation
- Elevation Place
- FCSS Banff
- FCSS Canmore
- Food & Friends
- Job Resource Centre
- RCMP
- ROAM Transit
- Rocky Mountain Ski Lodge
- Rocky Mountain Soap Company
- St. Michael's Anglican Church
- Three Sisters Taxi
- Town of Banff
- Town of Canmore
- Trinity Bible
- Wild Life Distillery
- YWCA Banff

# AWARENESS GROWTH

As a newly formed society, HSBV relies on the support from the community, and aims to increase the awareness of not only HSBV programs and operations, but also of the homelessness and housing instability concerns within the Bow Valley.

It is clear that within this past year, HSBV's presence in the community has been strengthened. This has been especially true following February 25th, 2023 when HSBV coordinated and facilitated Canmore's first ever Coldest Night of the Year (CNOY) event, a fundraising initiative owned and administered by BlueSea. CNOY is a national fundraising walking event that aims to raise funds to support individuals experiencing homelessness, hunger, and hurt within local communities. To learn more about the national CNOY event, please visit <https://cnoy.org/home>.

In addition to increased community awareness, HSBV saw outstanding success through the CNOY event, reaching 226% of our fundraising goal, resulting in a total of \$45,276 funds raised.





# AWARENESS GROWTH

To HSBV's delight, growth in community awareness and support also extended into local schools and retired communities.

Our Lady of the Snows (OLS) Grade 5 classes took creative initiative to craft and sell handmade bath bombs. Half of the funds raised from the bath bomb sale were then generously donated to HSBV. The grade 8 OLS class also had a desire to support, creating guest care packages that included hats, socks, hygiene products, and packaged snacks. These awesome care packages were then gifted to grateful shelter guests during the last week of shelter operations.



Student Mary Villanueva, left, Mattias Giannandrea and representatives with the Homeless Society at Our Lady of the Snows Catholic Academy on March 21.



Understanding the importance of supporting the Bow Valley community, residents at Origins at Spring Creek organized a fun-filled 'pie in the face' initiative to raise funds for HSBV.

Rumour has it that some of the residents and staff still have whip cream in their hair!



# TEAM GROWTH

Through the generous funding received for the 2022/2023 year, HSBV had the capacity for internal team growth. In January 2023, HSBV welcomed and onboarded two new team members, Jessica Klaric (Executive Director) and Annie Vlahiotis (Fund Development Coordinator), who have and will continue to play a key role in organizational development, longevity and growth.



- Guide Organizational Growth
- Policy Development
- Operational Oversight
- Program Development
- Partnership Building
- Networking
- Advocacy

**Jessica Klaric**

- Fundraising Initiatives
- Grant Writing
- Event Planning
- Sponsorship Management
- Public Engagement Support



**Annie Vlahiotis**



2022/2023

# Program Overview & Feedback

2022/2023 was the third consecutive year of operating HSBV's (formerly REST program) low-barrier emergency winter shelter, and was the longest operating season to date!

The emergency low barrier winter shelter opened on December 15th, 2022 and closed the morning of April 1st, 2023. The shelter was open from 9:30 PM to 8:00 AM and a total of 5 beds were available for guest use.

HSBV ensured that 2 staff were present at all times during shelter operations. The emergency shelter was open for 108 nights, 55 nights longer than the 2021/2022 operating season, and was open during 11 extreme cold weather events (temperatures below -27 celsius).

HSBV would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Town of Canmore for providing the Scout Hall space, and Scout Hall users and neighbours for their support and understanding.

**What does low-barrier mean?**

- Reducing any barriers to access
- No ID requirements
- Meeting clients where they are at
- Harm reduction approach

## EMERGENCY WINTER SHELTER

Dec 15 - Apr 1



Scout Hall, Canmore, AB

30

Total Guests

2.3

Guests/Night

263

Bed Nights

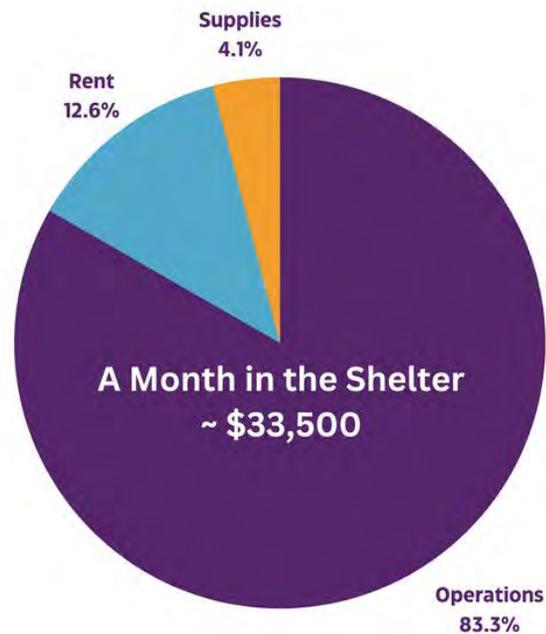
16

Referrals

In comparison to previous shelter operating seasons...

	2022/2023	2021/2022	2020/2021
<b>Total Guests Served</b>	30	26	17
<b>Total Occupied Shelter Bed Nights</b>	263	296	104

Based on financial data from the 2022/2023 operating period, the costs associated with running a low-barrier emergency shelter within the Bow Valley is approximately \$33,500.



Being a low-barrier shelter, HSBV does not require guests to share personal information nor does HSBV collect demographic data unless voluntarily offered by guests through an optional Guest Demographic Survey (Appendix A). A total of 7 demographic surveys were completed across the operating period and revealed that of all participants:



# OUTREACH PROGRAM

HSBV's Outreach Program is focused on providing continued support, outside of the emergency winter shelter, to individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. Through the Outreach Program, individuals can connect with our Outreach team via phone and email in search of system navigation support, program referrals, and emergency services such as transportation and commercial accommodations (contingent on budget & availability).

In the 2022/2023 operating period, HSBV's Outreach Program, operated from November 23rd, 2022 to December 15th, 2022 and reopened January 9th, 2023. During the 2022/2023 operating period, the Outreach Program connected individuals experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity with:

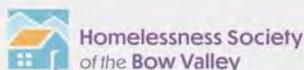
**3**

Nights in emergency  
commercial  
accommodations

**6**

Emergency  
Taxi  
Rides

**THANKS TO OUR DONORS (AND FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER)  
HSBV WILL BE OPERATING OUR OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR  
THE REMAINDER OF THE 2023 YEAR!**



## OUTREACH PROGRAM

Thanks to the generosity and support from our community, partners and donors, our Outreach Program will be available and ongoing throughout the remainder of the year. If you or someone you know is in need of support, please contact us:

 **403-493-3771**

 **outreach@bowvalleyshelter.ca**

# GUEST FEEDBACK

HSBV's mission is to ensure diversity, equity and inclusion while providing programs and supports for those within the Bow Valley experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity.

With this in mind, HSBV places utmost importance on providing a safe and respectful space for guests to share their thoughts, experiences, and feedback on HSBV programs. In addition to daily conversations with shelter staff, HSBV hosted two in person guest feedback sessions on the mornings of February 25th and April 1st to engage with guests, ask questions, and provide a voluntary opportunity to share over a warm breakfast and hot coffee.



Through honest and open dialogue, guests shared their thoughts, experiences and opinions. Here are some paraphrased quotes shared by guests during conversations:

**"I am so thankful for this program. I feel safe and comfortable."**

**"Living in the city is not for me, I've been in this town for a long time and I don't feel I should have to leave because I don't have a place to stay right now."**

**"This shelter saved me from a lot of cold, long nights"**

# GUEST FEEDBACK

During the feedback session, some important findings and recommendations were noted by guests and have been summarized below. Additional feedback from guests can be reviewed in Appendix B.

**If the shelter wasn't operating through the winter, where else might you stay?**



**In your opinion, what were some successes of the Shelter Program?**

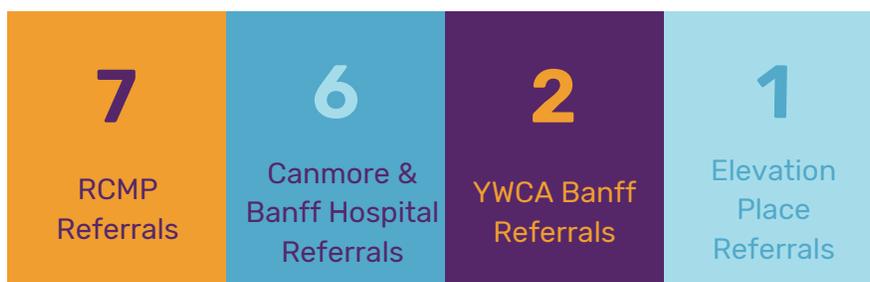


**What, if anything, would you change about the Shelter Program?**



# PARTNER FEEDBACK

As we've heard directly from our shelter guests, 'word of mouth' and partner referrals are key to disseminating program information and ensuring those in need are aware of HSBV programs and local supports more broadly. In fact, over 50% of our shelter guests in 2022/2023 were directly referred to the shelter by community service providers:



For continued program development, HSBV distributed an online survey to gather suggestions and feedback about our programs from community partners.

A total of 5 Feedback Forms were completed by community partners including Alberta Health Services, Bow Valley Food Alliance, FCSS Canmore, the Job Resource Centre Canmore and Primary Care Network.

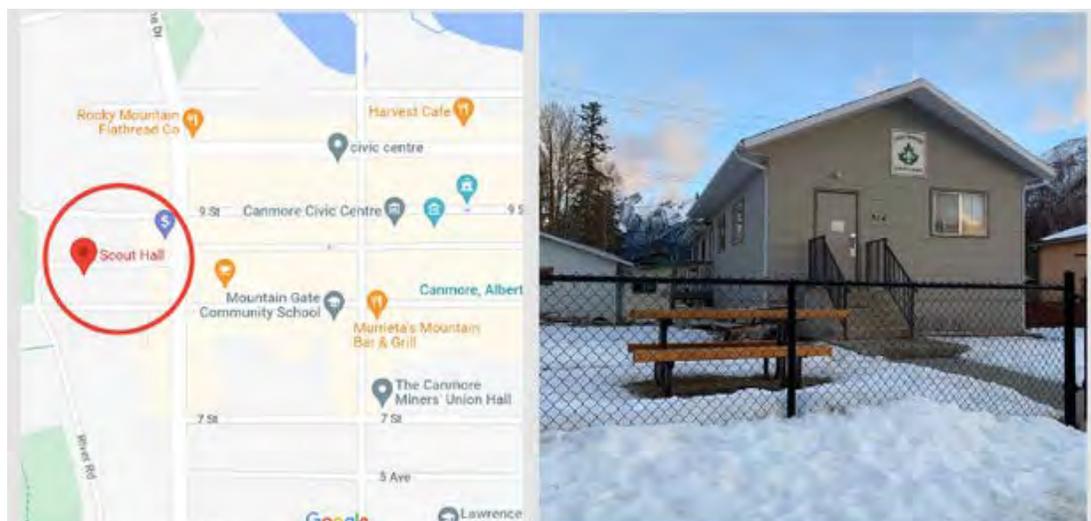


Through the feedback form, it was revealed that 60% of respondents 'very clearly' understood our programs, 20% noted that their understanding was 'clear', and 20% outlined their understanding as 'somewhat clear'.

# PARTNER FEEDBACK

To increase program awareness and mitigate any barriers to a clear understanding, HSBV wanted to determine what resources would be most helpful to 1) improve partner understanding and 2) refer individuals in need of support. From the feedback form, it was clear that community cards outlining shelter details (example below) was and would continue to be most effective. Additional feedback from community partners can be reviewed in Appendix C.

Moving forward, to facilitate effective and efficient referrals, HSBV will continue to develop and distribute reference materials outlined as helpful by respondents.



# STAFF FEEDBACK

HSBV prioritizes safety within the shelter space, and this extends to both guests and our staff. Staff are provided with various professional training opportunities including: non-violent conflict intervention, Naloxone administration, Indigenous Cultural Awareness, and RCMP Controlled Substances training.



To learn more about staff experiences working with HSBV and receive feedback for program development, HSBV hosted an in-person staff feedback session as well as distributed an anonymous online survey. Through dialogue with staff during the feedback session, some important findings and recommendations were noted and summarized below. Additional staff feedback can be reviewed in Appendix D.

## Shelter Program Recommendations

**Extended  
Check-Out  
Times**

**Maintain 2+  
Staff at  
Shelter**

**Continue  
weekly  
meetings**

**Develop  
case/client  
file process**

## Outreach Program Recommendations

**Increased  
Community  
Presence**

**Office  
Hours**

**Weekly  
Team  
Meetings**

**Clearer  
Program  
Definition**

**Focus on  
Information  
Sharing**

# VOLUNTEER FEEDBACK

From our Board of Directors to our Public Engagement Committee, HSBV is fortunate to have support from an outstanding and passionate group of volunteers. HSBV values the input from our volunteers and recognize that their roles and commitment is vital.

An online volunteer feedback survey was distributed to reflect on the 2022/2023 operating season and receive suggestions from our valued volunteers. Results from the feedback form revealed that:

**How likely are you to continue  
volunteering for HSBV?**

**Very Likely  
100%**

**How easy was it for you  
to get the resources you  
needed to perform your  
volunteer role with  
HSBV?**

**Easy  
100%**

# FEEDBACK SUMMARY

HSBV would like to extend a special note of gratitude to those who participated in feedback sessions and offered valuable insights on our programs. We appreciate participant honesty, thoughts and willingness to share. Moving forward, feedback gathered from participants will be used to guide continued program development. Here are some of the ways in which feedback has, and will continue to be incorporated within our programs:

**Mobilize additional fundraising initiatives to secure sufficient funding to lengthen shelter operating period and hours**

**Search for long-term & sustainable solutions to provide a shelter space that meets the needs of our guests**

**Researching & planning implementation of client file management system & process**

**Continue to offer food supports & coffee gift cards during 2023/2024 shelter operating season**

# A LOOK AHEAD

With such an amazing year behind us, the HSBV team is so proud of what we have achieved to date. But, as a motivated team with a passion to support those in need in our community, we are dedicated to keeping up the momentum and growth of our organization. As demonstrated, there are certainly areas of continued improvement and development. Long-term, HSBV aims to:

1

## Long-Term Permanent Shelter Space

Establish a permanent shelter space in a convenient location for long-term use and increased hours of operation. Provide guests with facilities such as showers, laundry, common space, staff only area, and storage.

2

## Continued Annual Outreach

Ensure our Outreach Program is operational year-round for continued support.

3

## Long-Term Sustainable Funding

Sustainable, long-term funding is absolutely necessary to meet the needs of our community and to maintain and grow HSBV operations.

4

## Charitable Status

HSBV is working toward charitable status with hopes of becoming an officially registered charity by 2024.

***Would you like to get involved? Interested in providing support?***

**Donate to HSBV**



**Follow HSBV to  
keep up to date for  
events,  
notifications &  
volunteer  
opportunities**

# **HOW CAN YOU HELP?**

**Lead from a place  
of compassion and  
understanding for  
all community  
members**

**Spread the word  
about HSBV  
programs**

**Follows us on Facebook, Instagram & LinkedIn: @bowvalleyshelter  
Check out our website: [www.bowvalleyshelter.ca](http://www.bowvalleyshelter.ca)**

# CONCLUSION

In the 2022/2023 year, HSBV has made demonstrable progress toward our mission and goals:

- Through the emergency winter shelter, HSBV has provided 30 individuals experiencing homelessness with a warm and safe space to rest.
- Through our outreach program, HSBV has and continues to have the capacity to offer community-based support outside of the emergency winter shelter.
- HSBV has facilitated feedback opportunities and open dialogues with shelter guests, community partners, staff, and volunteers with the goal of incorporating recommendations, lived experience, and diverse perspectives in program design and approach.

It is through the generosity and support of our community and donors that we are able to do this work and fill a clear need within our close-knit Bow Valley community.

As a devoted team with a passion to support those in need within our community, we are determined to keep up the momentum. To work toward our long-term goals, in 2023/2024 HSBV will continue efforts to support organizational growth and development in several ways including: applying for charity status and conducting a Review Engagement on 2022/2023 financials. Ultimately, HSBV looks forward to the year ahead and remains committed to our mission of providing local, community-based, wrap around support for individuals who are experiencing homelessness and housing instability within the Bow Valley.

# APPENDIX A: VOLUNTARY GUEST DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY



Homelessness Society  
of the Bow Valley

## Guest Survey

Welcome to the Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley's Emergency Accommodation Program. This survey is;

- Optional. Participation is completely voluntary.
- Anonymous. Feedback is not recorded in relationship to the guest's name.
- Helpful. Information received helps HSBV understand guest demographics, which leads to more relevant and informed programming.

Whether or not you choose to participate in this survey, thank you for considering it and we're glad you are here.

---

1) Have you been prevented from accessing other Bow Valley services due to any of the following reasons? Please mark each relevant answer with a check mark.

- Lack of I.D.
- Ineligibility due to program criteria
- Lack of suitable transportation
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say
- I have not faced barriers accessing other programs in the Bow Valley

Comments:

---

---

2) What ethnocultural group(s) do you identify as being part of? Examples include but are not limited to First Nations, Metis, Inuit, Person of Colour, Caucasian.

- \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

# APPENDIX A: VOLUNTARY GUEST DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

3) What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Transgender
- Prefer to self describe: \_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say

4) What age range do you fall within?

- 18 – 25
- 26 – 35
- 36 – 55
- 56 – 65
- 65+
- Prefer not to say

5) What has been your experience with precarious housing/homelessness?

- No previous experience
- Occasional experience, generally for short periods of time (less than two weeks).
- Occasional experience, with some instances involving longer periods of time (two weeks or more).
- Regular experience.
- Prefer to self describe:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- Prefer not to say.

6) How did you hear about the Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley?

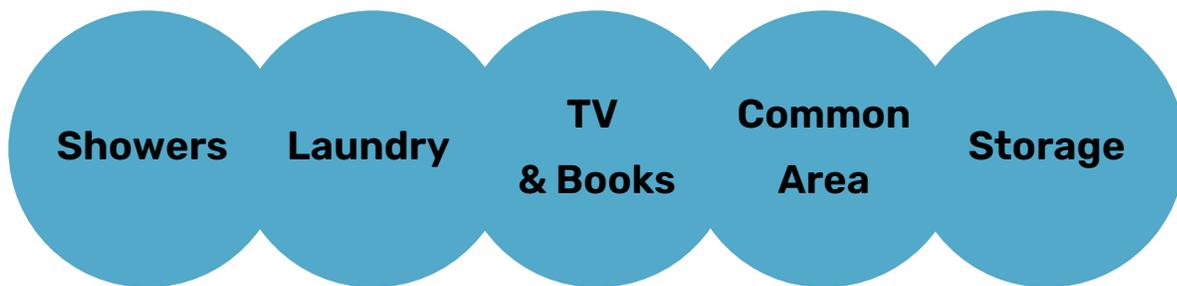
\_\_\_\_\_

7) Comments/Feedback for the Homelessness Society of the Bow Valley:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL GUEST FEEDBACK

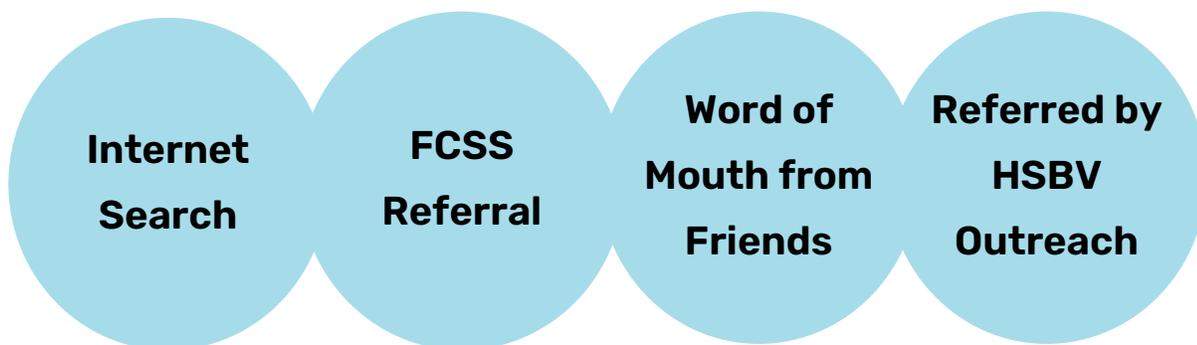
What recommendations would you have for the physical shelter space?



Besides a place to sleep, what was the most helpful support you received through our program?

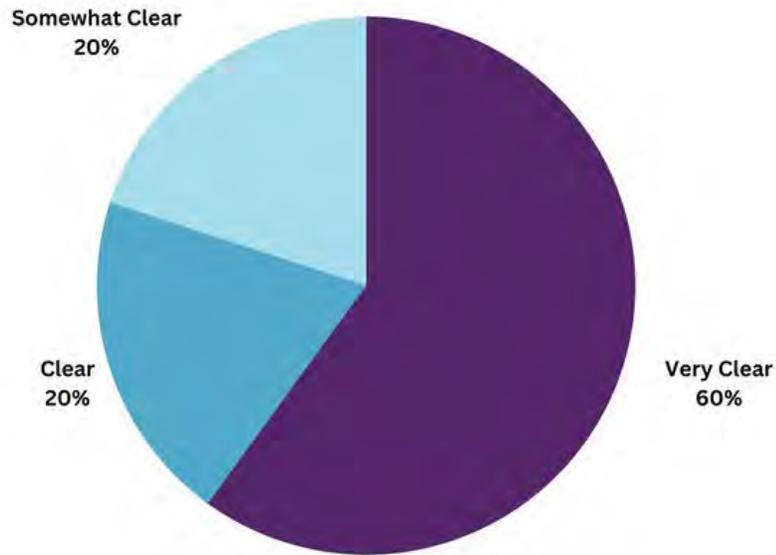


How did you become aware of HSBV's shelter program?

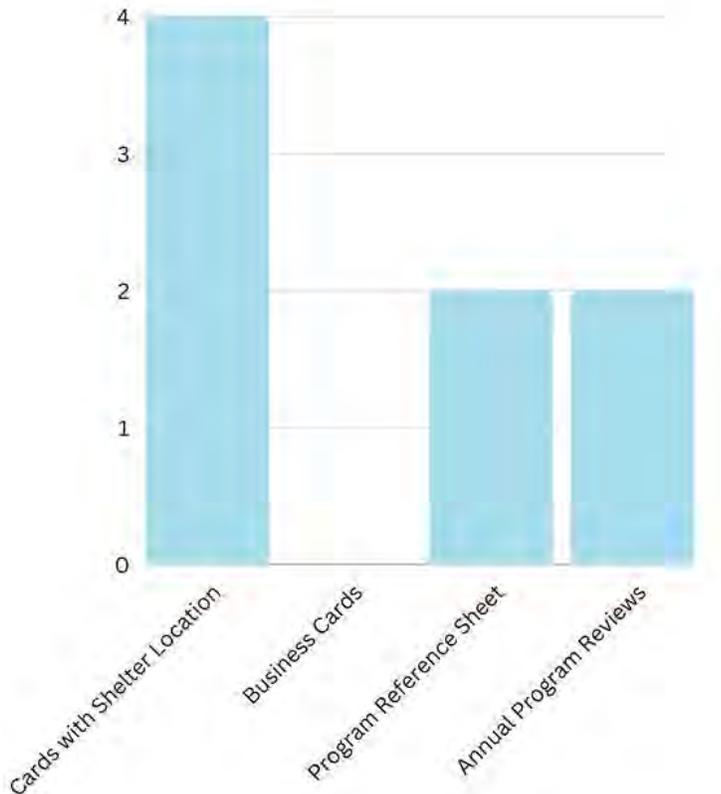


# APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL PARTNER FEEDBACK

In your opinion, how clearly do you and your team members understand our programs and services?

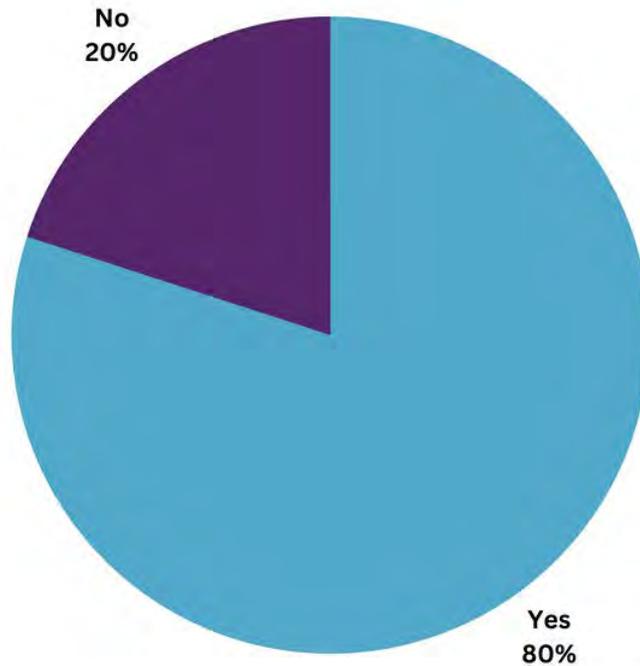


What resources has / would be helpful in increasing your understanding?

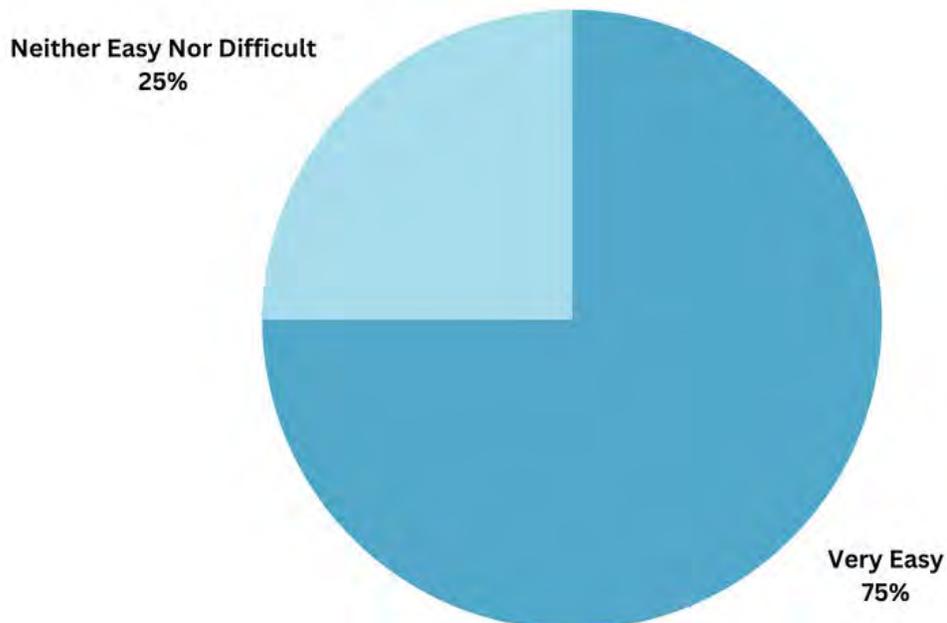


# APPENDIX C: ADDITIONAL PARTNER FEEDBACK

**Have you ever referred an individual to our programs?**

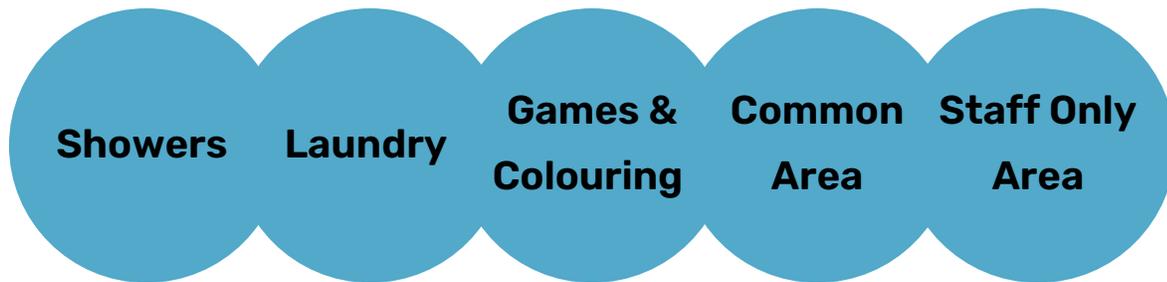


**If yes, how easy was it for you to refer clients to our service?**

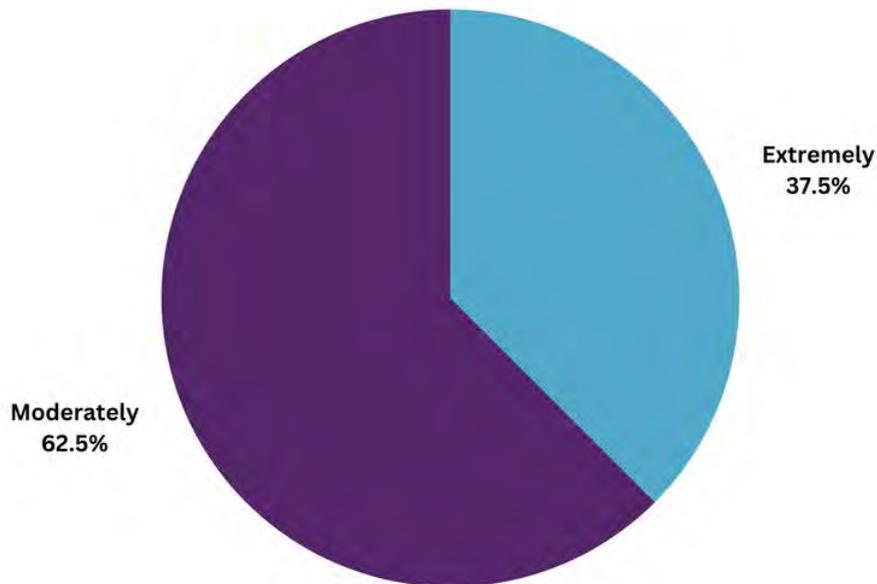


# APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL STAFF FEEDBACK

## Shelter Space Recommendations:



## How safe did you feel during your shifts at the Shelter?

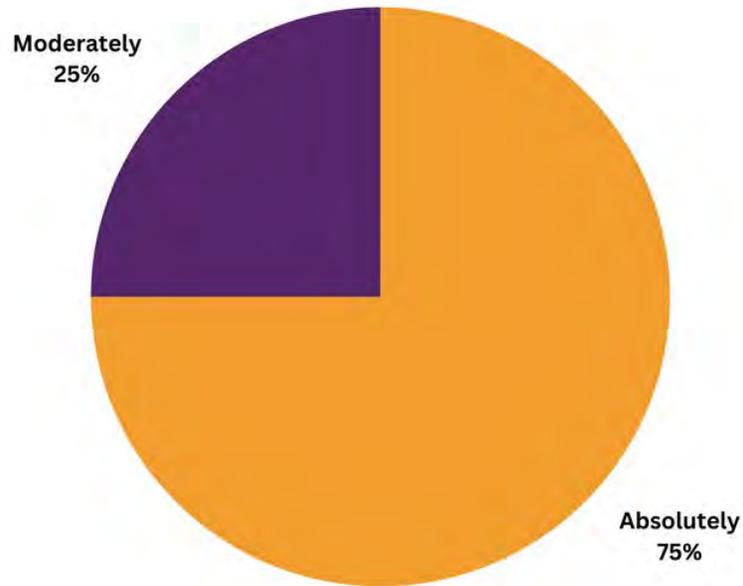


*Note: staff noted that their sense of safety when working in the shelter was elevated with HSBV's 2-staffing model and hands-on management approach.*

*Recommendations for increased safety in the shelter included: maintaining 2+ staff and additional non-violent crisis intervention training and trauma-informed care training.*

# APPENDIX D: ADDITIONAL STAFF FEEDBACK

**Do you feel your experience with HSBV has contributed to your professional growth and development?**



**How likely are you to work for HSBV again in the future?**

