Rise Up

AGM Report 2025

Over the past year there has been some change in Rise Up’s programming. Since the last AGM funding stream has changed for Rise Up as well as other programming formerly funded by Health Canada at ANKORS. Today Rise Up is focused on Trail BC and the street folks that reside in the shadows of this city.

Rise Up is working mostly in Trail with Various community partners, such as Interior Health, Mental Health Outreach and OAT Outreach, Trail OAT Doctor, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, IH regional Outreach Nurse, Selkirk Outreach Nursing students, United Church, Salvation Army, City of Trail, Trail Community Action Team, Trail Rural Empowered Drug User Network, Trail La Nina Homeless Shelter. Bulk of the work we are providing is Episodic Overdose Prevention.

EOPS is provided by my co-worker Lindsay and Regional Outreach nurse on Mondays. Lindsay and I are doing EOPS in Trail on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, and Friday EOPS is provided by Lindsay and Rob (ANKORS mobile HR coordinator).

The number of people accessing our services in the winter outreach in Trail is on average 32 people a day. During warmer weather the amount of people accessing services has climbed to an average 42 people a day. We generally provide two rounds of services to the homeless populations and people who use drugs starting behind the 7-11 where people gather to hide from the elements ie heat and rain. Next we zig zag through town looking at places in back allies and side streets and covered stairwells where street folks frequent. We then make our way to the walking bridge/gazebo where street folks also gather. There is no where in Trail that people can gather and be safe and warm or cool depending on weather. We have no cooling centre or drop ins anywhere in Trail like other communities in WK/B region. Then if we have time prior to lunch we will go to East Trail by the waters edge to the encampment and outlying areas. Once we finish this route, we do it all over again.

We provide folks with peanut butter/jam sandwiches (donated 3 days/week United church, 1 day a week Salvation Army and ANKORS make the sandwiches)1 day/week. We also provide water and vitamin C crystals, a yogurt cup and sometimes the united church donates some dessert type options. We also provide tents, sleeping bags, tarps and such when available. The Interior Health Outreach provide Ensure drinks, protein bars and bottled water.

Interior Health Outreach folks and ANKORS EOPS meet about once a month to discuss issues and how things are going.

During this process several of the folks we serve struggle with infections of various sorts related to drug use. We provide referrals, I provide wound care, bandages and sometimes we provide a ride to the hospital or other health care facilities to folks who with infections and other health conditions. The OAT Doctor also provides Outreach on Thursday mornings, and we help to connect the folks needing medical attention.

We are seeing different kinds of drugs in the community such as Fentanyl Analogues of various strengths. We are seeing specific benzo’s that are not necessarily of a strong nature but lasts up to 24 hours once ingested. The fentanyl in these drug mixes is short acting but the benzo’s are long acting. Folks tend to re-dose the Fentanyl/Benzo mix to get the desired Fentanyl affect. The Benzo’s then accumulate in one’s system and stays in one’s system for 24hrs after ingestion. This makes for a difficult time to stay conscious if continued re-dosing. Many of our folks tend to re-dose to get desired effect and the stacking of benzo’s eventually becomes difficult to wake people. Once breathing is down to a breath every 9 or 10 seconds and person is difficult to rouse we will call an ambulance.

Protocol for paramedics is to immediately dose person with Naloxone once they are not rousable even though color is good and they are breathing somewhat normally. It is difficult to distinguish whether a person is sleeping because they are up all night or because they are on the verge of overdose but with a close watch on vitals we can manage without necessarily giving Naloxone.

The fear is once a person is injected with Naloxone and in withdrawal they will go off on their own and re-dose putting oneself at extreme risk of OD/death.

ANKORS drug checking provides services in Trail at the La Nina shelter. Once we receive the Mobile Outreach Van in September for Trail we are hoping to find a place where the Van can stay stationary for a desired amount of time. This will help include other services such as drug checking for other community members. However, I have been bringing back samples to the drug checking coordinator in Nelson at least once a week.

Weather is getting hot and dangerous for people without shelter. La Nina Homeless shelter can only house about half the street population and the rest linger in the shadows of Trail trying to make ends meet. One of the issues I’ve witnessed is during extreme heat. Street folks fall asleep in a shaded area and once asleep the sun moves within 15 minutes and exposes people to the sun. People are hard to rouse once asleep and end up with heat exhaustion/stroke with nowhere to go for reprieve.

Stigma, discrimination, threats and violence towards street populations is rampant in Trail. I have many reports of Trail Citizens abusing people who are homeless. Street folks revert to carrying different types of handheld items (bat like weapons) for weapons to protect themselves. Reports of young people participating in these violent and discriminate approaches is increasing.

I will add that there is nowhere safe for our unhoused and addicted to go for refuge. No drop ins, La Nina shelter only houses 25 of the more obedient folks and are whimsical in their ability to enforce rules that are not posted and the verbal rules change depending on individual. The stairs and back alleys are the Trail refuge for the rest of the unhoused.

Food is available at the Salvation Army until 1:pm Monday thru Friday. Unfortunately, due to the chaos of being unhoused and unpredictability of the street drugs help to keep street folks unavailable until the early afternoon and by then the Sally Ann is closed. Folks are dependent on the sandwiches/beverages provided by Outreach teams.

We continue this work with the hopes that the Trail community will provide all Trail residents including the hard to house with the housing and health needs much needed to help sustain lives and in effect becoming a healthy and vibrant caring community.