



Kelowna Foundation for Hope & Social Innovation

From Idea to Reality

The Child Advocacy Centre is deeply proud of its history. It is an inspiring story of how community partnership can drive change when dedicated to a common purpose. The idea of a Child Advocacy Centre in Kelowna first surfaced in September of 2014 when a group of purpose driven individuals begged the question: “What would it take to make this happen in our community?” What followed was three years of dedicated dialogue, research, and ideation.

In May of 2017, a family tragedy inspired community member and retired businessman, Al Hildebrandt to connect to the cause of developing the CAC. A few months later the Kelowna Foundation for Hope and Social Innovation was repurposed to help bring the CAC from idea to reality. This was an important step forward as the existing charitable status of the Kelowna Foundation provided the necessary financial and business structure to advance the project and the functional capacity to raise the funds critical to making it all happen.

Steps Along the Way

Multi agency projects like this are no easy feat to realize, Al and the Kelowna Foundation team achieved a number of significant milestones which fundamentally moved the project forward. The first critical step was to engage the lead agencies (Police, Child Protection and Health) and formalize their intention to work together, which was achieved by way of a signed letter of intent in October of 2017. Following that, the space at #200, 1815 Kirschner Road was identified and secured to become the future home of the CAC.

In February of 2018, with these key pieces in place, Al and his wife Irene made a million-dollar personal commitment to the project and with another million-dollar matching gift secured from the community in June of 2018, the project was set to take the next steps. In the months that followed the project gained support from hundreds of individuals, businesses, and agencies, all determined to be part of building a better solution for children impacted by abuse and neglect. Each of these milestones marked an important step forward in the journey towards building a CAC. The CAC is deeply grateful to the countless individuals, agencies and corporations that rallied to make this project possible and to Al and his wife Irene who, in the end, personally committed 1.1 million dollars, a startup operating loan (since repaid in full) and two and a half years of dedicated service and leadership.

The Outcome

On January 1st, 2020 after years of research, planning, advocating, negotiating, fundraising, designing, and building, the Child Advocacy Centre of Kelowna opened its doors as an independent, charitable entity ready to serve the most vulnerable children of the Greater Okanagan. Only a few weeks later the beginning of realizing our purpose was fulfilled when we welcomed our first child through the doors. Each day our team arrives in this beautiful space purpose built to support vulnerable children. A space made possible by the collective understanding that we can achieve more together than we can on our own.