

Our Place Society

The housing crisis in Victoria transcends mere shelter; for Our Place transitional housing resident Lwanga, its repercussions echo through every facet of her existence.

Lwanga is non-binary and came to Canada as a refugee from Uganda in 2019, where Anti-LGBT sentiments are written law. As recently as April, courts in Uganda doubled down on extreme legislation criminalizing same sex conduct, restricting health care and housing access, and in some cases even allowing the death penalty.

"I came to Canada because it is the land of the free for LGBT!" she says, throwing her hands up and smiling.

This freedom was evident to her from the moment she arrived. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. Lwanga's first language is not English, she had no money, and no connections. She was homeless for several years.

In addition to homelessness and the isolation she felt in a new country, Lwanga had to manage a positive HIV diagnosis. She says she was sick, but it is too hard for her even now to share what she experienced.

A few months ago, Lwanga came to My Place, Our Place Society's transitional shelter. Here, Lwanga has shelter, a bed, warm meals, and access to all of Our Place's services. She is grateful to receive antiretrovirals and is in good spirits about her future today.

"Everyone has been so nice to me," she says of the outreach workers and staff at My Place.

When asked what she hopes for the future, Lwanga becomes quieter.

Even with her basic needs met, the stress of being unhoused takes a toll. She

knows she wants to return to school and speaks excitedly about having a private home where she can have her family from Uganda visit after all these years.

Due to the scarcity of housing in Victoria, Lwanga will likely have a long wait ahead for a home of her own. Thanks to Our Place Society, Lwanga will not only have essential care, but can foster the sense of hope and belonging she needs to get there.

You can donate to support Our Place family members like Lwanga at ourplacesociety.com/donate



Our Place nourishes hope and belonging for everyone. Experiencing homelessness, struggling with addiction, or otherwise not having your needs met often means facing disrespect and fear in our city. When folks are also met with discrimination due to their gender identity or sexual orientation, the world becomes that much harder.

Beyond food and shelter, at Our Place we believe that **everyone deserves care that supports who they are and their unique needs.** Every Our Place site is a safe space for any person to feel the embrace of community. In fact, every Our Place family member is celebrated and supported through physical, spiritual, and cultural care. This includes food, shelter, hygiene, medical care, addiction recovery services, funeral services for loved ones, talking circles inspired by Indigenous framework, and more.

Your generosity means someone struggling today can find a safe place where they belong.



Give the gift of hope and belonging.

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