

My name is Wade Swagar, I am an OPS support worker in the harm reduction room at the Hub. I started volunteering for ANKORS on Baker St. in July 2021 as a part of my personal journey through recovery and was subsequently hired for the same position at the Hub in January of 2022. I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the support staff during my time with the organization and look forward to continuing my work with our inspiring team to develop relationships with our guests.

The OPS room at the Hub continued to provide a safe, supportive environment for injection drug users from Nelson and the surrounding communities. Trained staff have provided injection supervision in our comfortable space, as well as harm reduction supplies for our guests from the community. We continue to encourage our visitors to access drug checking services when they are available onsite, or to drop off samples for testing if necessary. This testing service provides valuable knowledge about the local drug supply and is instrumental in helping to prevent overdoses in the OPS room as well as on the streets. The site also serves as a contact point for members of our community who need to access nurses, social workers, mental health practitioners, and housing advocates.

During the year we have seen a steady demand for the OPS room and have helped many of our guests access the services that they require. The space helps to foster a sense of community among our visitors, helping to reduce the frequency of drug use in isolation as well as needle sharing. At times the simple act of finding out how someone is doing while offering a snack and a drink, along with a welcoming ear makes a positive impact on both guest and staff. We feel honoured to participate in this ongoing, vital part of our community.