

Rise Up Community Engagement
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AGM Report for 2022

A good portion of the work Rise Up is doing was focused on participation in regional meetings such as Nelson Fentanyl Task Force, Castlegar Fentanyl Opioid Working Group, Trail Community Action Team (CAT) and Grand forks CAT. Rise Up also participated and helped support REDUN Trail, REDUN Castlegar and HOPE Grand Forks but to a lesser degree in Nelson. Peer work in Nelson is well supported with peer leadership compared to the other groups like Trail & Grand forks.

Trail Overdose Prevention Tent was suspended due to lack of use. The amount of OPS usage verses the efforts to find service providers properly trained to set up, break down and provide services proved to be difficult to fulfill. The other problem with accessing the site although we have a cover over our heads and around us it was still extremely hot or extremely cold depending on season. We also found street folks would rather stay in the alley by shelter to use substances, surrounded by their peers in case of overdose. Peers are quick to respond to overdose. People in the alley felt safer to stay put and use in the alley where there is less rules, drugs are available and peers are ready and willing to help save their peers rather than to walk a couple blocks face stigma and discrimination to get to OPS, answer a couple questions and then have someone straight watch them to quell the pain of existence. During the processes of work events I have been threatened more times than I've been in the past 2 decades of working for ANKORS.

Rise Up is now committed to participating in Episodic overdose prevention service in Trail, Castlegar and Grand Forks. EOPS is based on going to places where people are using drugs mostly outdoors to witness use, respond to overdose and to provide harm reduction services. Policy is based on two people providing EOPS by going to places where people gather and use substances ie Trail Back Alley by Homeless shelter and isolated areas in community where one, two or more people will stay out of sight and hide from community rivalry to use substances.

REDUN campout went without any significant problems except the fact that the cost was very expensive. We felt that and with further discussion we decided that it would be better to have REDUN/HOPE participate together at a facilitated educational event either put on by REDUN/HOPE or another event facilitated by another related peer group.

Many of the folks we work with are exhibiting more emotional turmoil due to homelessness and the toxic drug supply. It feels like much of what is happening in WK/B region is a repetition of the same issues. Homelessness, toxic drugs, community violence, lateral violence, sexual assaults, theft, deep infections, community rivalry towards our homeless populations, defecation on streets because of no washrooms available, isolation due to fear of community reprisal, etc.