

**Dundarave Festival's "Forest of Miracles"**  
**Doubles Transitional Support Services for North Shore Homeless**  
**Band That Saved Christmas Lights Up the Festival's Bonfire Night this Saturday**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(December 18 2013, West Vancouver, BC [www.dundaravefestival.com](http://www.dundaravefestival.com)) Set in a "forest of miracles" at Dundarave Beach, the Dundarave Festival of Lights will mark the longest night of the year this Saturday with the "Band That Saved Christmas" Christmas Concert, a "supergroup" of BC's leading independent singer songwriters. The Festival's 100 Christmas trees on the beach are set to raise \$25,000 to help end homelessness on the North Shore.

The Lookout Emergency Aid Society reports early signs of progress in tackling homelessness on the North Shore, powered by charitable donations raised by the Festival's trees. Even as increasing numbers of seniors and young adults find themselves without secure housing, the Lookout Society's North Shore Shelter is turning fewer people away. The Shelter's posted a 22% and a 16% drop over the past two fiscal years respectively in "turnaways".

"Donations raised through the Dundarave Festival have allowed us to double our transitional support staff," said the Lookout Shelter's David Newberry. "We've been able to reduce by over 30% the amount of time people remain in our transitional services program, opening more space for people to have the benefit of this crucial service. By being more effective in helping people move from homelessness back to stable lives, we're finding the Shelter is able to be more responsive at the intake stage. We receive no funding from federal or provincial governments for transitional support services. Without the Festival, none of this would be possible."

"My time in Transitional Housing," said an anonymous Lookout resident, "has helped me to work towards becoming a functioning member of society after years of trying not to exist in it. This place helps people that feel unimportant become whatever their potential can be."

"Homelessness and housing insecurity are very real challenges for West Vancouver, and across the North Shore," said West Vancouver Mayor Mike Smith. "I'm inspired by the way the Dundarave Festival gathers our community to face this reality with compassion, courage and intelligence. The Festival is a celebration of arts and culture that makes a powerful impact on the lives of the most vulnerable members of our community."

"We've created the Dundarave Festival to allow all of us to be better neighbours to each other," said Festival spokesperson Michael Markwick. "The Festival takes place over four weekends in the holiday season, but the friendships we develop don't stop there. They continue to grow stronger through the whole year, along with this community-driven resolve to make sure no one is left out in the cold."

The Festival presents, with the District of West Vancouver, a 15 metre bonfire on the beach, this Saturday. Santa will be joining us, arriving in an unconventional manner.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Michael Markwick, Dundarave Festival, 778-847-1426  
David Newberry, Lookout Emergency Aid Society North Shore, 604-910-5112