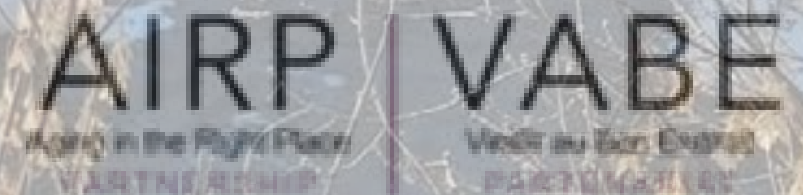




# Feeling the Lived Experiences of Aging, Homelessness, & Supportive Housing: Community-based Storytelling as Critical Pedagogy

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# Project Overview: Aging in the Right Place (AIRP)

**Objective:** To evaluate promising practices being used within housing services for Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness (OPEH), while also illuminating areas for improvement.

**Population:** Older Adults Experiencing Homelessness are identified as being anyone over the age of 50 that has had previous or current experiences of homelessness.

**Research Methods:** Photovoice, Arts-Based Elicitation, Built Environment Audit

**Universities involved:** Simon Fraser University (Vancouver, BC), University of Calgary (Calgary, AB), McGill University (Montreal)

**Project Partners:** more than two dozen co-applicants and collaborators, forty partner organizations, and nine older advisors with lived experience of homelessness.

**Funding:** The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) & The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC)

# Critical Pedagogy & Community Arts-Based Storytelling

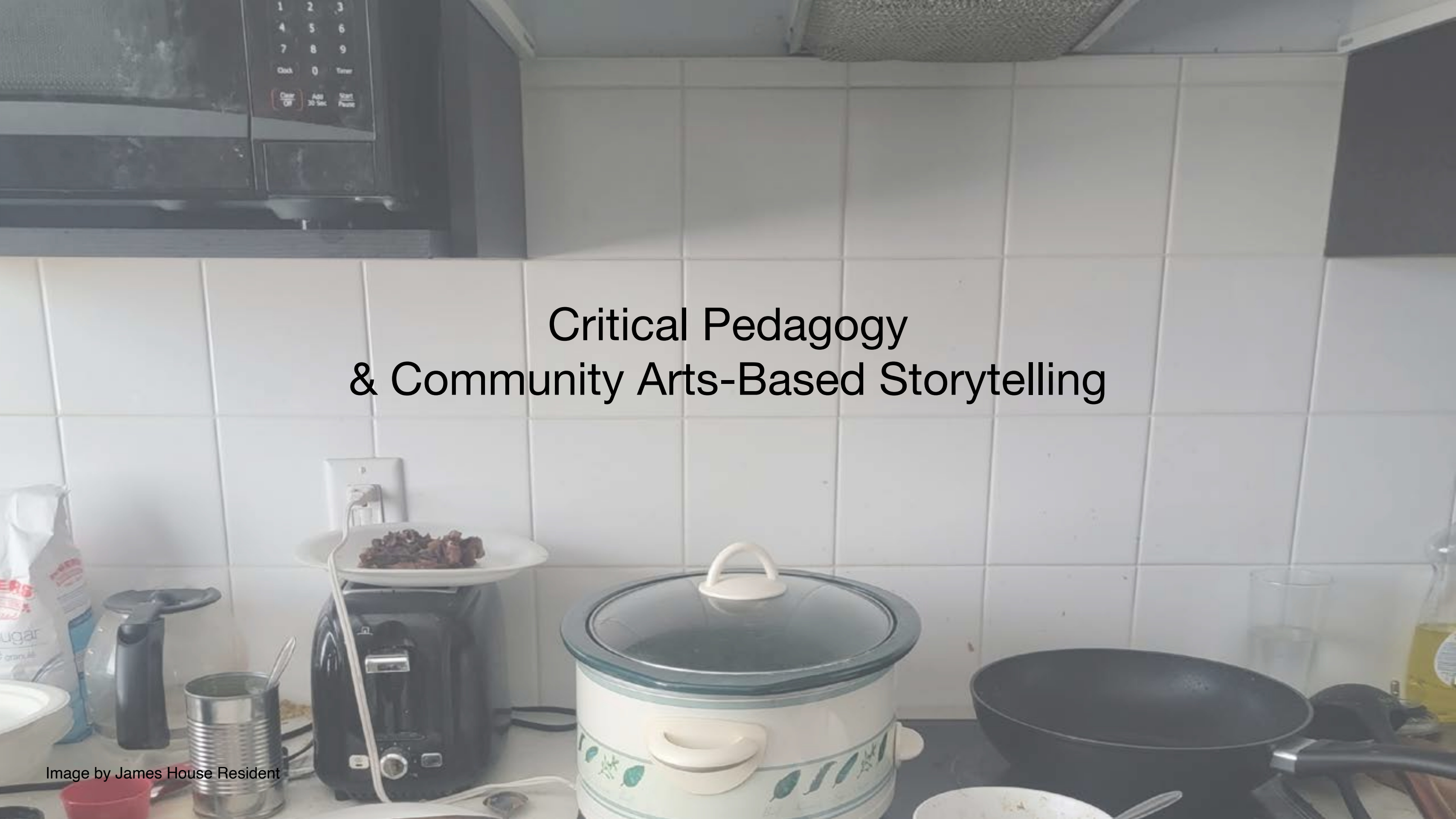


Image by James House Resident

## Critical Pedagogy

### Principles

- Knowledge should relate & develop from lived experience
- Learners co-create knowledge
- Education is political

### Aims

- Increase awareness of oppression
- Connect lived experiences with socio-structural systems
- Create critical thinkers who create new knowledge

### Approaches

- Co-create flexible curriculum
- Cultivate hope & resistance strategies
- Pursue democracy & equality in learning

**Critical Pedagogy**



# Community Arts-based Storytelling

Arts-based storytelling allow us to record & transmit *felt* experiences.

Creating art (ex: photography, film, painting, collage, etc.) are acts of embodied reflection, interpretation, and creation: the body is an intermediary between experience and record.

Arts-based storytelling reflects & communicates embodied experiences of oppression, including ageism and classism

Sharing Arts-Based Storytelling within community can generate social empathy, shift stigma, and catalyze social change

(Capous-Desyllas & Bromfield, 2020; Grittner & Burns, 2020; Taussig, 2011; Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, & Hannes, 2017)



Image by James House Resident

# Architecture Housing Studio

Semester process:

Housing Theory & Policy

Experiential Community-Based Learning

Design Supportive Housing



Multiple days on-site  
Built Environmental Audit  
Sensory Cellfilms

**MArch - Cellfilms**



# Architecture Housing Studio

Candace's Reflection:

*I have never stepped inside a supportive affordable housing complex, so the entire experience was eye-opening.*

*I saw firsthand the lack of human-centric design. I think the most significant factor that impacted my experience was how unwelcoming and cold the building felt. From the lack of a lounge/lobby space to the close proximity of the smoke room with individual units, to the small rooms, and to the narrow and dimly lit hallways,*

*For vulnerable older persons who may have not had a home for years, providing the sense of one is important, and a home is not a room made up of 4 walls.*

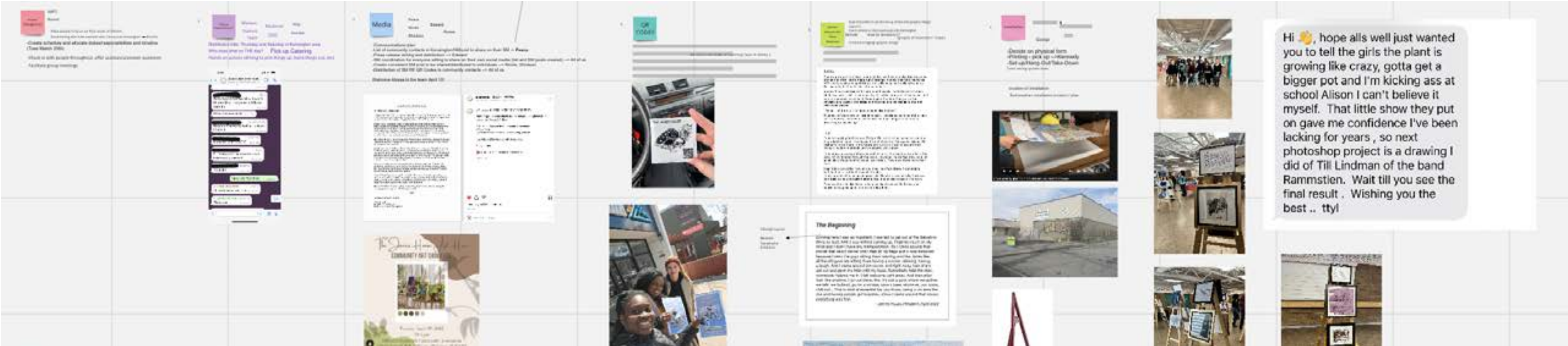
*I will take away from this studio that advocacy and education are important and are a critical first step in exposing, educating, aiding, and sparking the conversation in the fight against social injustices.*



# BSW Community Practice

## Semester assignment: Community-Based Action

- Increased knowledge of OPEH (performed research transcriptions, visited sites, consulted with lived advisory & community members)
- Collectively determined action, steps, and roles for implementation
- Curated community art exhibits
- Completed final reflections concerning where they noticed power & oppression (internal/ external)





# BSW Community Practice

## 2021 - Within Community

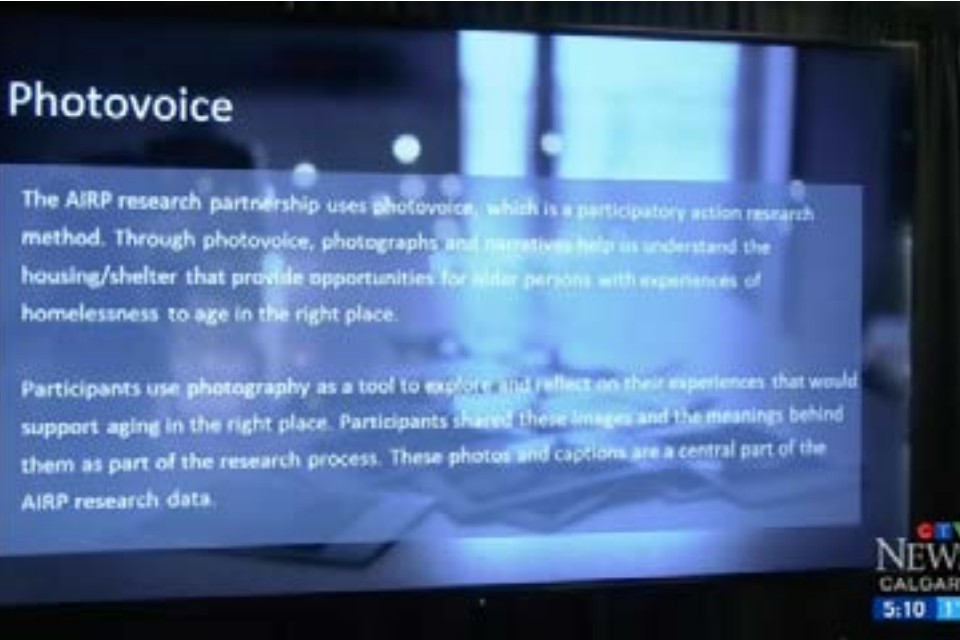


**BSW Art Exhibits**



# BSW Community Practice

## 2022 - Calgary City Hall



1. *Maddalena*
2. *K.S.*
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5. *Amir Amar*
6. *[Signature]*
7. *Jan Goy*
8. *Jaqueline Lozano*
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**BSW Art Exhibits**



# BSW Learner Reflections

*The art show was so inspiring. I mingled, getting to know the artists and the guests, looking through the art and talking to the artists about their story really touched my heart. **I could see one of the artists looking at people looking at his art with such pride...**His story was so moving, and watching him feeling empowered, valued, and celebrated, was inspiring. It was an aha moment for me. it's not all the accolades of academia that matter, it's the groundwork and ability to implement and take action. - Hamera*

*When I got a lukewarm response from a few media outlets, I felt like calling back and saying, "Listen dammit, you are covering this event because if you don't show up, I will look bad," forgetting that **the event was about showcasing the artwork of older homeless and not my ego.** I had to bring it back to these vulnerable community members. - Edward*

*The event itself was unbelievably fulfilling. I'm extremely grateful that I was able to attend and **see the art in person.** Each piece of art told a story – revealing hardship and resilience. - Nicole*

*When I was transcribing the interviews, I was really emotional and even cried through a couple of them because of **the raw reality of the situation these older adults face.** It's easy to think of them as case studies or view their stories as cliché however that is the life, their life and that's their truth. I think it was really powerful for me to see some of the topics that we covered in lectures come to life within the interviews and the stories of the clients telling them. - Kennedy*

# Learnings

59 BSW and 13 MSW graduates carry:

- critical understanding of aging, homelessness, and housing
- knowledge of advocacy and working to challenge oppression

6 MArch graduates carry:

- felt/affective knowledge of housing design (and poor design) for OPEH
- knowledge of how to advocate for anti-oppressive design

Generated social empathy & consciousness raising within community, municipality, and supportive housing service providers, which evidence shows is a key element to fostering social justice

(Grittner et al., 2021; Segal, 2011)

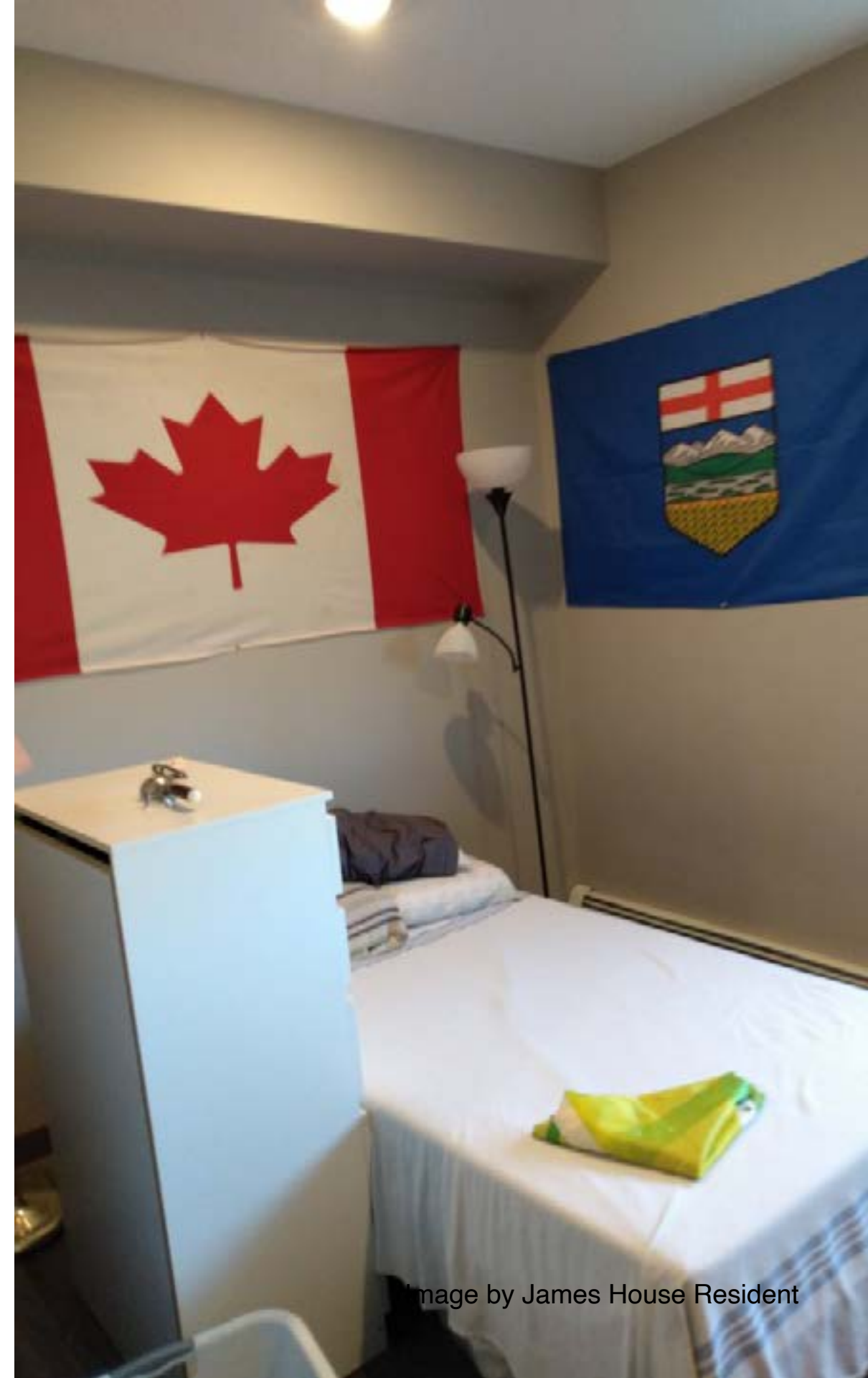


Image by James House Resident



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