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We thank
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Julian's Message

Our Place CEO

When I walk down Pandora, it becomes very clear that things need to be different.

It distresses me to see so many displaced people. No one should be consigned to living on the pavement in our city. It's a crying shame. All people deserve so much better.

It also frustrates me when people try to lay the blame for the condition of Pandora's 900 Block at the feet of Our Place.

Our Place is one of the charities that is actively trying to help. We did not create or enable the situation on Pandora, and we, as much as anyone, want to find a solution to it. In fact, our aim is to secure housing for everyone currently camping on Pandora before the end of the year.

Our Place's Street Outreach team is focused on this problem and is talking every day to those struggling on the streets to find out what it will take, and what supports are needed, to get people off Pandora and into housing.

In surveying every person camped on Pandora, we didn't find a single one who wanted to be left on the street. Each person told us they wanted housing, and what supports they needed to be successful once housed.

The survey showed that increased and active supports for addiction and mental health are just as important as housing. There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Instead, we have to tailor our supports to the individual.

Some of the highlights of the survey were:

- **0%** said they wanted to remain living on the streets
- **15%** have struggled with homelessness for over 10 years



- **23%** of individuals living on the block are female
- **23%** of individuals are over the age of 50
- **39%** of people are currently interested in accessing treatment programs
- **80%** have been homeless for more than 1 year
- **85%** have untreated physical health conditions
- **95%** are currently struggling with their mental health

I firmly believe the problems we are seeing on Pandora are solvable, but we can't do it alone. We need to do this together as a community, particularly with the support of local municipalities, local police, provincial housing and health departments. I feel there is a strong political will there to really make a difference, and it's time to address this situation once and for all.

With much gratitude,

Julian Daly
Chief Executive Officer



THANK YOU!

WE CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU. We are truly grateful to everyone who contributes to Our Place. We appreciate the care and compassion shown by donations of time, talent and money that benefit our family members. The many programs and services offered are only possible with the generosity of Our Place volunteers and supporters like you. Thank you!



Summer is Smiling



- EASTER - Easter Bunny Amy helps CEO Julian serve festive lunch
- ART DAY - My Place residents held a fun art contest
- BLOOMS - Albina Street housing get gardening
- NORTHERN LIGHTS - New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community
- ALBINA STREET - Celebrates 1st birthday with a BBQ



Our Family

Travis's Story

'The last time on the streets was so horrible, I honestly didn't think I was going to make it.'

When Travis was at his lowest point — dope sick and living on Pandora — he used to pray "Please don't let me wake up." Death was preferable to continuing to live on the streets.

"It was the most horrible time in my life," he says.

Travis's journey to this point began in childhood. Living in Germany, where his military father was stationed, he believes that was where "life started screwing my head up."

"It wasn't a nice time for kids," he says. "A lot of the German people didn't like us there, and it was always a nightmare when we ran into local kids."

After four years in Germany, Travis's family moved back to Ontario, and then Victoria.

Unfortunately, the fear and violence followed them as Travis grew up terrified of his father — a strict disciplinarian and alcoholic.

"A little boy shouldn't be scared to go home," he says. "Hide underneath his bed. Waiting."

When Travis was 13, "I just had enough," he says.

Travis ended up in front of a military council — "My dad's big boss" — and was sent to a foster home, but that "was the worst thing that ever happened to me."

"The lady (foster mom) was just there for the money, the house was filled with other

abandoned kids, and there were no rules. So, that's when I started drinking."

The drinking and partying soon resulted in Travis getting into trouble with the law.

At 15, he started his first stint in Juvie (Juvenile Detention) where he was sentenced to stay until he turned 16.

Upon release, he moved back home where his mother had joined a Tough Love group in an effort to change Travis's behaviour, but that only made him more rebellious.

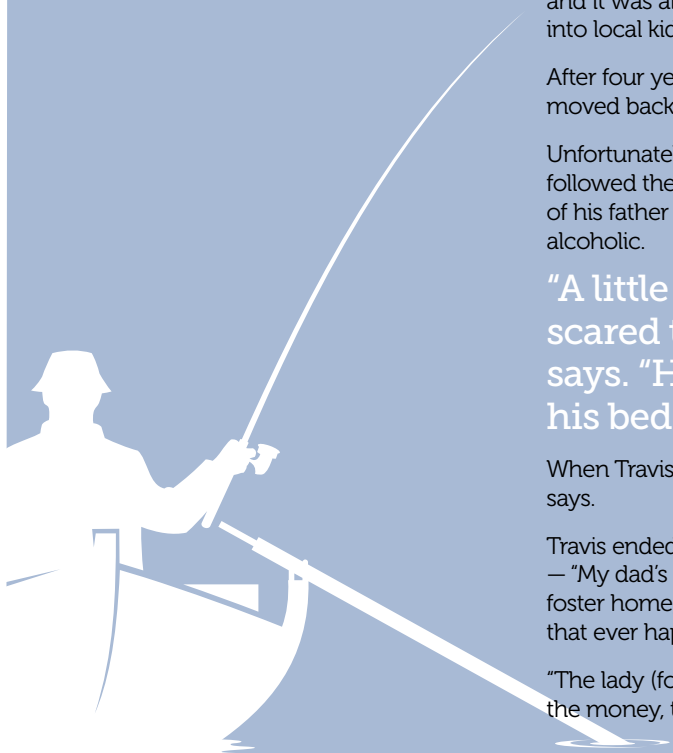
"They would lock the door at night if I wasn't home by curfew, and leave a sleeping bag by the front door," he says. "Needless to say, I rarely made it home."

Travis continued to get into trouble with the police "B&Es (breaking and entering) and stuff."

At 17, he was sentenced to Wilkie (Wilkinson Road Jail), which was an adult prison. "I was just a skinny, 120-pound kid."

He was inside for 16 months, and on his first day out, "that's when I started drinking again, and I was introduced to intravenous coke (cocaine). And I loved it for some reason."

Life outside prison only lasted for a couple of months before Travis was arrested again. In prison, he was introduced to morphine and quickly became addicted to the strong opioid.



BECOME A MONTHLY DONOR



JOIN OUR CIRCLE OF LOVE PROGRAM TODAY

Why not join the many donors who have chosen to give monthly? This eco-friendly method ensures the money saved on printing and mailing receipts goes directly to providing food and services for people in need. Plus, you get more control over your giving because you can cancel or alter your gift at any time. And, we'll send you one receipt for your annual donation in time for filing your tax return. Interested? Please call our philanthropy team at 250-940-5060 to sign up.



"And that was the beginning of a lot of years of alcohol and doing drugs."

During this time, however, Travis met his wife and became the father of two — a boy and a girl. Unfortunately, his criminal lifestyle didn't change, and he ended up back in jail.

When his son was born, Travis decided he needed to make a change. "I said screw this, and got on methadone (a prescribed drug to ease withdrawal and reduce cravings for opioids). That sorta helped me out, but after a while, you get bored, and I started doing cocaine again."

He split with his wife and "things went crazy again."

In 2008, Travis straightened out and gained custody of his kids while his ex-wife battled her own addictions. Using methadone, he kept off street drugs for seven years, and operated his own painting business.

Things were going well until one of his employees introduced him to crack cocaine. It only took a month before "I was so far downhill that was it."

Travis lost everything he had built: his kids, his business, a beloved fishing boat, his truck, and his life became a blur.

Living on Pandora, Travis picked up odd jobs at Our Place where he was hired as a painter for several projects, but he felt "life's over."

He tried several treatment centres, which gave him a few months of sobriety, but nothing stuck, and he always ended up back on the street. During this time, he lost his older brother to drug overdose.

Then one day, Travis saw Mark, someone

who used to be in the same desperate situation but had turned his life around by attending New Roads, Our Place's long-term recovery community.

Travis decided he wanted to give it a try.

"Two weeks in detox, went to New Roads, started the program, and, I don't know, something finally clicked in."

After 9 months at New Roads, Travis has no desire to return to his old life.

"The last time on the streets was just the most horribilist time in my life," he says. "I honestly didn't think I was going to make it."

Today, Travis continues to attend New Roads while working full-time at Our Place. He is also making plans for the future.

"I'd like to have my own place one day," he says. "Continue working at New Roads until I'm 65. Get my credit rating up, and just be happy."

THANK YOU TO ALL! We are back to recruiting NEW volunteers and looking forward to increasing our volunteer capacity in both food services and clothing distribution. Please visit our online application and orientation process for safer and easier access to the Our Place volunteer experience at: <https://www.ourplacesociety.com/volunteer/>

VOLUNTEERS

HAPPY YOU ARE HERE!

Clean Teams

The crews that care

One of the first suggestions that Jim has for the Clean Team at My Place is to rename it the Care Team.

"Because we care about our community," he adds. "That's why we go out and pick up trash, glass, discarded needles, cigarette butts, anything that shouldn't be on the ground."

When My Place, a transitional shelter in the former Boys & Girls Club on Yates Street, first opened, the new residents wanted to show the neighbourhood that they weren't people to be feared. They simply needed housing.

To that end, the first Clean Team was started to patrol the community and clean it up. The program was so appreciated by the neighbours that the program has been expanded to other housing and shelter sites that Our Place operates.



CALEDONIA: JAMIE, ALY, TINA, LUKAS & RYAN

"I like going to work," says Jim. "And I always say hello to the dogs, and that gets people smiling and talking."

His fellow Clean Team member, George, agrees. "I find that people are really friendly, and they always say 'thank you.'"

"It's part of being seen," adds Mike, a third member of the team. "And it shows that we're considerate."

Mike, Jim and George have worked for most of their lives until circumstances led them to lose housing and end up surviving

on the streets. My Place offered them an opportunity to begin rebuilding their way back into permanent housing.

At Caledonia, a small village of supported housing units beside Royal Athletic Park, the team is equally enthusiastic about their contribution to the neighbourhood.

"I just love to help," says Tina. "And that I want to keep things clean so that children are kept safe on our streets."

Meeting the neighbours is an important aspect of the team, says Jamie. "Letting them know that just because we're homeless people or whatever, we're not nobody, we're nice, we're respectful, you can approach us, talk to us."

Aly adds: "It's nice to have a chance to change people's idea about what the people here are doing and what it means for their neighbourhood."

While schedules vary per site, the Clean Teams typically operate for one hour per day, four days a week, and there is a small weekly stipend for the workers.



MY PLACE: MIKE & JIM



Our Donors

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world. In fact, it’s the only thing that ever has.”
– Margaret Mead

Meet **Women for Women**: Following a tour of the New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community, Lyndsay Green was inspired to take action.

She was deeply impressed by the men participating in the New Roads program and was grateful to learn about the forthcoming Women’s Program, which will open in the fall of 2024.

Lyndsay decided to rally her networks to create a pioneering group of women to serve as Team Captains. The group started with just 15 women passionate about bringing long-term addiction recovery services for women to the Island.

This small group has the ambitious aim of rallying 300 women to advocate and fundraise for the renovations of the **New Roads Women’s Program**.

With a commitment for each team captain to reach out and inspire 15 women themselves, their impact is rippling out to hundreds in the

NEW ROADS: New women’s program is under development.

community, and it just keeps growing!

“Women who commit to turning around their lives deserve our support,” said Lyndsay in her appeal to the newly founded group.

Women for Women recognized not only the overwhelming need for these services, but most importantly that it is within their power to uplift, empower, and support the healing of other women on Vancouver Island.

They didn’t wait for a solution; these women stepped up and showed what women can do when they work together!

Both a fiercely passionate and nurturing force, this group understands the needs and circumstances of mothers, daughters, and friends who are seeking support and can’t find it.

The group hopes to encourage women in recovery on Vancouver Island with this simple and empowering message when they arrive to the new Women’s Program: “These 300 women believe in you.”



WE ARE GRATEFUL!

No matter the size, every donation makes a difference in someone’s life at Our Place.

Your generosity adds up, and together we provide housing, medical care, addiction recovery services, hygiene and clothing, and over 1,400 meals every single day.

This support for our fellow Victoria citizens is only made possible by your generosity.

We can’t thank you enough.

To give to Our Place Society, visit www.ourplacesociety.com/donate



<CREATE YOUR LEGACY OF LOVE : As well as your loved ones, please consider a gift to Our Place Society in your will. Your thoughtfulness will make a lasting difference to those experiencing poverty, homelessness, physical and mental health issues, and addictions. For a confidential conversation about giving options and the tax savings – please contact Janice Kalin: 250-940-5060 Ext. 5101, legacy@ourplacesociety.com.

SAVOUR THE DATE

10th annual Hungry Hearts gala

Eat, drink, and empower women in recovery. On Sept. 21, eight of the region's top chefs will join Our Place for the 10th annual Hungry Hearts gala.

An elevated culinary competition and fundraiser, this year's Hungry Hearts gala is a milestone event and pivotal opportunity to break the cycle of addiction for women on Vancouver Island.

All proceeds raised at **Hungry Hearts 2024** will directly support the first long-term women's recovery program on Vancouver Island. This ground-breaking initiative is slated to open this fall at **Our Place's New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community**.

"We have seen life saving and life changing results from the men's recovery



program at New Roads," explains Director of Philanthropy Janice Kalin. "We are hungry to provide the same care and opportunity to the women of Vancouver Island."

The women's wing of New Roads is desperately needed. While women account for 32% of the addicted population in BC, a shocking 46% of overdose deaths in 2023 were women. Providing long term recovery services is a crucial step towards a healthier society.

chefs, complimentary drinks, live music, fabulous auction, inspirational stories, and meaningful networking opportunities.

Date: Saturday, Sept. 21

Time: 5:45pm

Location: Delta Hotels by Marriott Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort

Only 250 tickets available. Get yours today!

www.ourplacesociety.com/hungryhearts

Hungry Hearts is proudly presented, for the 10th year in a row, by PwC. Thank you to sponsors like PwC for their leadership and commitment to helping Our Place serve the most vulnerable members of our community.

A heartfelt gathering of business and community leaders, Hungry Hearts features elevated cuisine from eight top

Sponsorship

Businesses and community groups are invited to sponsor Hungry Hearts 2024.

Demonstrate your values by partnering with Our Place as we create the first long-term Women's Therapeutic Recovery Community on Vancouver Island.

Harness the power of event and media advertising and engage a deeply caring and influential local audience. Hungry Hearts sponsorship enhances brand visibility, emphasizes your commitment to social responsibility, and provides impactful community engagement.

Contact rachelh@ourplacesociety.com to learn more about sponsorship today.



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