



# Finally, people find a pathway off Pandora

**I**t's been an intense summer on Pandora with significant challenges and difficult events, but with the likelihood of all street camping ending by winter, with the unhoused on Pandora moving into shelter and housing, I'm feeling more optimistic than I have for years.

For a very long time, we have refused to accept that a tent on a sidewalk is any place to reside. It is one of the reasons why we called for action from those who have the means to provide the shelter, housing, mental health and addiction supports that folk need to successfully get off Pandora.

And they have been listening. And, more importantly, acting.

We have been working closely and collaboratively with the City of Victoria, Victoria Police, Island Health, BC Housing, Ministry of Housing and other service providers to implement long-term, sustainable solutions to street homelessness in Victoria.

The first step has been the opening of 40 new shelter beds in our existing locations to provide immediate care to those sleeping in our parks and on our sidewalks.

But make no mistake, we see this as just that, a first step.

We won't stop working together and advocating until everybody has a safe place inside where they can regain their dignity, health and connection to life-transforming supports.

We envision a day when multiple avenues of support are in place: sober housing for people coming out of recovery and treatment; women's-only housing for safety and healing; pet-friendly housing; and, yes, additional emergency shelter for those who need a respite from the elements and want to start their journey to permanent housing.

Our Place's staff and volunteers have never worked harder to make the daily survival of our family members a top priority, and it's their compassion that spurs us on to fight for solutions. And I want to emphasize, we do believe there are solutions.

Before the end of the year, our hard work will pay off as we open our first, long-term Therapeutic Recovery Community for Women. The demolition stage is complete, and the building of this healing community has begun. Based on our successful men's program, New Roads, where 110 individuals received treatment in the last year alone, the women's community will be completely self-contained to best serve our residents in their journey out of addiction.

Action. Healing. Results.

None of this would be possible without your support.  
Thank you!

With much gratitude,  
**Julian Daly**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Our Place Society



To donate to Our Place Society,  
please visit us at:  
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call 250-940-5060, or email  
[donors@ourplacesociety.com](mailto:donors@ourplacesociety.com)



# Much-needed Recovery Community for Women Under Construction

Recovery from addiction is essential to Our Place's mission. Alongside the Our Place Community Centre and additional housing sites, Our Place operates the New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community for men with acute and chronic substance use issues. New Roads is a critical part of Our Place's strategy to support people moving off Pandora avenue and towards permanent housing and re-integration into our community.

The 9-to-24-month program at New Roads boasts a success rate more than double the commonly implemented 30-, 60-, and 90-day addiction recovery programs frequently offered. New Roads provides individual and group counselling, medical monitoring with physician and nurse access as needed, and a variety of structured additional programs. Focusing on the whole person, additional programming includes employment skill building, future housing and social support, creative outlets such as painting, physical activity, gardening, and cooking.

Currently, no programs with this capacity and support exist on Vancouver Island for women. To receive a long-term bed, women have to make the difficult choice to leave children, family, and friends behind and travel to the mainland for the duration of any available program. The majority of these programs have a price tag of more than \$30,000 per month. Following their treatment, positive outcomes can quickly diminish as the healthy support systems they have built are disconnected from the home they return to on Vancouver Island.

Women already face heightened vulnerability and bear a disproportionate burden of gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, and exploitation. Female family members often act as the primary caregivers and, without a place to find recovery, addiction and substance abuse disorders can ripple through generations.



*New Roads Therapy Dog, Jango*

This year, Our Place will open the first long-term women's recovery community on Vancouver Island with the same life-transforming programs currently producing outstanding success rates in the men's facility.

Construction is well underway, and we can't wait to welcome the first residents in the coming months!

Learn more about New Roads at [newroads.ourplacesociety.com](http://newroads.ourplacesociety.com)

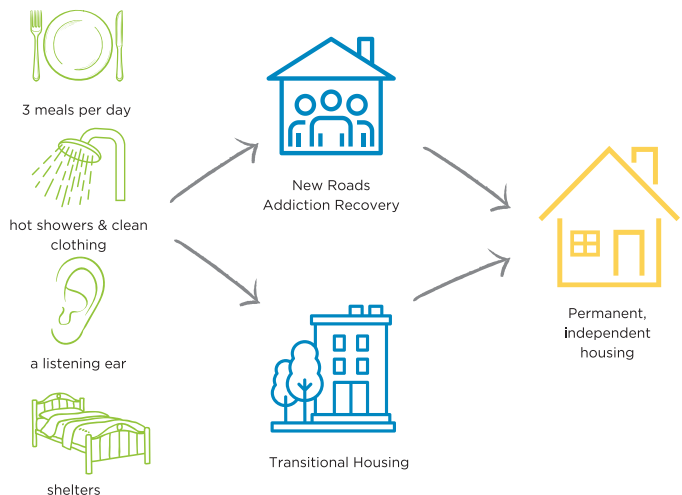


*Director of New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community, Cheryl Diebel*

## Where does addiction recovery fit into Our Place Society's programs?

Our Place does not provide just one solution to people experiencing homelessness, addiction, and other barriers to health and wellness. The path to permanent housing and recovery isn't the same for everyone and requires many personalized steps. This starts with the decades of trust Our Place has built with the local community.

It usually starts with a meal, a listening ear, or somewhere to rest for the night. From there, residents of New Roads often come straight from the street into treatment





# Solutions to Homelessness That Work.

A few months ago, the Our Place community centre was treated to a meal where the usual fare of oatmeal was upgraded to nutritious and delicious scrambled eggs, fruit, sausages, and croissants. This special meal was thanks to the sponsorship of a local man, and whenever this happens the donor has the opportunity to serve the meal alongside the Our Place team. For this meal, that donor was someone who knew all too well the importance of the meal they were serving.

Several years ago, Lloyd Hardman was using Our Place services regularly to get by. Lloyd lives with an autoimmune disease, Crohn's Disease. Before finding Our Place, the disease had ravaged his body, he had undergone twelve surgeries, dealt with medication side effects, and the stress of navigating a struggling healthcare system without support. He wasn't able to work and had completely exhausted his savings and resources.

After the passing of his mother, he describes life as "[beating] me down" until he was at his lowest. He was living in his car, the last asset he had from a thriving career in the tech industry, when he found Our Place. As it does for so many Our Place Family Members, it started with a meal.

**"They just sort of opened the door and kept things moving for me."**

What followed was a haircut, hot showers, one-on-one support from Our Place outreach staff to navigate health and social services specific to his situation, and drop-in programs like tax clinics and community gatherings. In Lloyd's case it was only a short time before he was stable enough to find work as a food delivery app driver.

"It helped me to get my body back up. Knowing I can get a hot meal at Our Place, swoop in, grab a hot meal, get back on the road, back to work."

All these years later, Lloyd came back to Our Place. This time, his life and career are reinvigorated and he's able to provide the kind of hope and relief that he received at the Our Place Community Centre. It's such a heartwarming sight as he serves alongside Our Place volunteers and spends time with Family Members who are navigating the tough situation he was once in himself.



But, it isn't just an example of a bright future that Lloyd provides to those he is serving. It is the empathy and understanding that so many people don't receive when they're struggling.

"There were a couple moments during my meal service where I got a little overwhelmed. I started thinking [...] about how much pain and suffering you're going through during that time."

It is with this sense of empathy and unconditional love that Our Place greets every person who comes through the doors. Thanks to the many people like Lloyd who have benefited from Our Place's programs, we know it works.

"The resources of Our Place and the message of hope and belonging and acceptance, I took it to heart. It's such a pleasure to give back and be in a position to do so."

**Our fellow citizens need support right now. Help stock the Our Place community centre before the winter cold hits.**

Your gift ensures everyone can access the food, shelter, hygiene, medical care, and one-on-one support that Our Place can provide.

Donate now at  
[www.ourplacesociety.com/donate](http://www.ourplacesociety.com/donate)



Our Place is deeply grateful to our incredible Hungry Hearts chefs, sponsors, and donors.

**Thanks to their generous support, we raised a record-breaking amount in support of women in recovery at the tenth annual Hungry Hearts gala!**

The funds raised at the gala are instrumental in supporting Our Place in opening the first Therapeutic Recovery Community for Women on Vancouver Island this winter.

Thank you for helping break the cycle of addiction for women, families, and communities on Vancouver Island.

## Thank you to our Hungry Hearts Chefs!

Marilena Cafe & Raw Bar – *Chef Kristian Eligh*

House of Boateng Cafe & Catering – *Chef Castro Boateng*

Delta Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort – *Chef Curtis Toth*

Boom + Batten Restaurant & Cafe – *Chef Laurie Munn*

Inn at Laurel Point – *Chef Brett Yamashiro*

Fireside Grill – *Chef Nicolas Fennell*

Oak Bay Beach Hotel – *Chef Kreg Graham*

Virtuous Pie – *Sous Chef Paige Ronald*

## Thank you to our Hungry Hearts Sponsors!

