

## Benoit's Journey to Fatherhood

For the first 20 years of Benoit's life, violence and abuse shaped his view of the world. In order to survive on the streets of Montreal, he learned how to communicate with his fists. He was fearless.

But, he soon learned that his bravado was a dangerous coping mechanism and his affiliation with a street gang was putting his life and members of his family's life at risk. His only option was to run.

Benoit made his way to Vancouver Island just as Victoria was set to host the Commonwealth Games. It was far away from the life he had left behind, but Benoit continued the life he knew and endured the hardships of day-to-day survival on the street.

Street life eventually took its toll on Benoit both mentally and physically. He wanted something more for himself so he sought treatment for his drug addiction. Once he was clean and had secured housing, Benoit applied for work as a janitor at **Our Place Society**. Bob Frank, Manager of Facilities along with the Outreach Manager, Jordan Cooper, recognized Benoit's natural leadership skills and his ability to authentically connect with people who struggle with addiction and mental health issues. They asked him to be a part of the Our Place Outreach Team. To this day, he credits the Our Place staff with helping him find his self-worth and his path to continued healing.

Benoit is a long way from his days on the street, but he will never forget how it felt to be isolated, alienated, scared and hungry. His life experience informs his way of assisting those in need. He says, *"Kindness and empathy matter. The people coming to Our Place trust me because I relate to them where they are at. They know I understand what they are going through."*

### Benoit

Lead Outreach Worker  
Our Place Society



Hope and Belonging



# Your Father's Day

GIFT OF LOVE

**A Gift of Love**  
was made in your honour  
to  
**Our Place Society**  
as a tribute  
to how you care.

**Our Place Society** has grown from a unique inner-city community centre to five locations serving Greater Victoria's most vulnerable: working poor, impoverished elderly, people who are mentally or physically challenged, struggling with addictions, or homeless. Individuals and businesses provide 50% of the financial support for our programs and services. Our Place provides over three meals per day, hot showers, education, job skills, health care, addiction recovery services, donated clothing, counseling and outreach services, a 60 bin storage facility, plus 45 transitional housing units and over 150 shelter spaces. Most importantly, Our Place provides a sense of hope and belonging to our neighbours in need.



Hope and Belonging

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