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FALL NEWSLETTER
2021

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We thank Mail-O-Matic for donating resources to print this colour newsletter

Chief Executive Officer's Message

One might think that in a time of pandemic, when everyone and everything is shuttered away, that the work of a not-for-profit would slow down, even close down.

The truth is, we have never been busier.

The staff at Our Place have been incredible at not only showing up every single day during the pandemic, but doing it with gusto and energy.

In the last newsletter, I talked about how we have housed and sheltered over 500 people directly off the streets, and that work has not gone unnoticed.

When Rev. Al decided to retire after decades in street outreach, he requested that Our Place continue the legacy of his Dandelion Outreach program. Our Place has always focused on bringing people into our downtown community centre, so the addition of a street outreach program is a perfect fit.

We can now reach folk in Greater Victoria that we never had the capacity to do so before.

When donors heard that we wanted to explore a second-stage recovery home for men graduating from our New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community, they embraced the idea and made it a reality.

In a matter of months, we purchased, renovated and opened Jaymac Place Recovery Home. It houses up to six men who can stay from six months to two years while integrating back into the community.

Our partnership with BC Housing running transitional housing has been very successful and they have named us the operators of a new, purpose-built project on Albina Street in Saanich. The supportive housing site will provide permanent homes to approximately 52 people, and construction is scheduled to begin this year.

And in the midst of all this, we still found time to create a new Rooftop Garden at 919 Pandora to supplement the nutritious meals that our kitchen cooks up every day.

With much gratitude,

Julian
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 over 60 programs and services offered are only possible with the generosity of Our Place volunteers and supporters like you. Thank you!



Busy Summer at Our Place



CLOCKWISE: Dandelion becomes Our Place program; New rooftop garden launched; New (free) mural at Our WorkPlace; Pride celebrated in paint at 919; Jaymac Place Recovery Home; Albina Street housing project design concept.

Our Family

Max's Story

“ **Drugs led me down a dark path. A lot of struggles.** ”

If there is one thing Max has learned in his young life, it's that recovery takes time. It is not as simple as flicking a switch and being 'cured'.

It takes hard work, self-determination, and a support network of family and professionals championing you along the way.

Max was only 13 when a drug dealer visited the 'smoke pit' where he was hanging out and offered him his first taste of drug-induced escape.

“I turned to an older friend of mine and asked if I should try one. He said yes, and I got hooked immediately,” says Max.

That 'free taster' quickly started Max on a bottomless journey of drug and alcohol abuse.

“As much as I could get, really,” he says.

The drugs made him feel cool and that he fitted in with the older students that he looked up to, but he soon lost control.

“It led me down a dark path,” he says. “A lot of struggles. I didn't graduate when I should have, I was using all the time and drinking as much as I could.”

When he turned 20, Max had been sober for about 8 months, was working for a landscape company, living in his own apartment in Sidney, and inspired to start his own Hillbilly band.

Unfortunately, Max returned to alcohol and hallucinogenics, and began to experience the first stages of mania. Even without much musical training, Max marched into a local pub and began playing and singing at the top of his voice for the customers. He knew he was brilliant and was filled with the possibilities.

“My charisma was dialed up to 10, and my confidence was through the roof, but I was also talking in a Western accent and started telling people I was from Louisiana where Jerry Lee Lewis was born.”

But then the period of mania turned dark when he decided it was a good idea to pick up a switchblade and cut across his eye from forehead to cheek. The idea was that the scar would get people whispering about him when he was on stage performing with his chart-topping band.

Fortunately, his uncle dropped by to drop off some food and saw the blood dripping from Max's face.



“He kinda freaked out,” says Max. “And called my grandma. She called the police and they found me singing on the streets. After seeing my face, they took me into hospital to be assessed, and that's when I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder.”

Over the next few years, as he slipped in and out of sobriety, Max was in and out of psychiatric wards and the prison system.

As part of a court order, Max was assigned to a Pandora ACT (Assertive Community Treatment) Team, and they suggested he

check out Our WorkPlace, an employment program operated by Our Place.

“It worked really well,” he says. “I started taking the classes, and then Paula (job coach) said they may have found a job for me with St. Michael's University School as a custodian.”

Max interviewed, got the job, and completed the training. Everything started out well until Max relapsed and had to leave the job.

Losing the job was difficult for Max and made him take another heartfelt look at his sobriety. Thankfully, he had the full support of his mom, dad and grandparents.

With the proper medication for his bipolar, and a determination to stay sober, 26-year-old Max has now been clean for eight months. He recently moved into his own

apartment, and is ready to return to Our WorkPlace and find a new job.

“I'm looking for something part-time,” he says. “As I want to keep my sobriety strong.”

And with that new outlook, Max has also returned to his love of music.

One day while he was playing in Beacon Hill park, he met a young saxophone player named Isaac, and the two men hit it off.

They have since purchased busking licenses and taken their music to the streets. You can see them perform at Imagine After Hours on YouTube at: <https://youtu.be/VMbNLJyky1Q>

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 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.



< GARDEN GREENS - The 50+ Club enjoyed a summer packed with exercises, picnics, food outings and tours. From up-cycling old bicycle rims into a trellis for our Yates Street Community Garden plot to visiting the Royal BC Museum, the Club also went on the Victoria Harbour Ferry and had ice cream at Beacon Hill Drive-In.

A SUMMER OUTING

WITH THE 50+ CLUB!

Hungry Hearts

2021

Donors and sponsors came to the Hungry Hearts event on September 11 for a live auction led by Tony Joe, wonderful food from House of Boateng, and a taping with CHEK News anchor Joe Perkins, who hosted the televised version of Hungry Hearts, which aired on CHEK on September 18. Learn more on Page 8.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

OUR PLACE VOLUNTEERS ARE THE SNAP/CRACKLE IN OUR POP

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS! We are now actively recruiting NEW volunteers and we are looking forward to developing opportunities in new site locations in supportive housing. We also have a new online application and orientation process for safer and easier access to the Our Place volunteer experience. Please visit www.ourplacesociety.com/volunteer



Our Donors

Eileen Gormley followed her heart from Northern Ireland to Toronto.

After experiencing freezing rain, however, her heart had a rethink and eventually led her to Victoria with her family. She loved it here, and worked as the Office Manager at First United back when the Rev. Lawrence Moon was in charge of the Open Door.

"We hosted monthly dinners for the homeless, so I saw the need firsthand," Eileen remembers. "It's an ongoing need, unfortunately. But today, the services provided by Our Place have expanded significantly. I think it's great there are now staff who help deal with mental health issues. So much stems from those."

"Currently, the pandemic is attacking everyone's mental health. Even deciding to go out and get groceries is a big decision now," she says.

Pausing a moment, she adds, "Luckily, I have the money for groceries. Not everyone does. I think those people need to be in our thoughts and actions now and in the future when the challenges might be just as big or bigger."

A decision to make a bequest to Our Place made sense to Eileen: "I just thought that, if I had anything left in this world, I could leave a little something to continue to help those facing poverty and homelessness."

The process is simple enough. "If you've got a will, it really doesn't take more than a couple of minutes to put in a legacy gift," she explains. "It makes me feel that what I've done while I'm alive will continue after I'm gone. Those values are important to me."

Eileen's big heart has since led her to a retirement in Parksville, where she gardens, trips over her coffee table, and continues to support Our Place because, "It's important for all of us who can to support the work."



Things We Need

- MEN'S PANTS
- MALE & FEMALE UNDERWEAR
- SHOES
- GLOVES
- GIFT CARDS
- SCARVES
- TOWELS
- BLANKETS
- SLEEPING BAGS
- TOILETRIES
- RAIN GEAR
- ART SUPPLIES

Please contact Diana Gallivan: dianag@ourplacesociety.com 250-940-5063

LEGACY OF LOVE

A PLANNED GIFT CAN MAKE IT HAPPEN

CREATE YOUR OWN LEGACY OF LOVE: After providing for your family, please consider including a gift to Our Place Society in your will to help our family members facing homelessness and poverty. Your bequest will extend your compassion and values to folks who will need a helping hand in the future. Please contact Jonathan Dallison in confidence at 250-940-5066 or jonathand@ourplacesociety.com for information.

Creative Ways to Give



Dave Obee, Editor-in-Chief and Publisher of the Times Colonist, presents Julian Daly, Chief Executive Officer of Our Place, a cheque for \$86,750 in support of our emergency meals service. We thank them for their inspirational kindness, generosity, and commitment to making a difference in the community.

Hungry Hearts shine brightly for Our Place

The vibrant business and philanthropic community set a new fundraising record when it came together for the 8th annual **Hungry Hearts**, a unique foody fundraiser for Our Place.

The Sept. 18 event raised over \$170,000 towards work as therapy programs that instill confidence, pride and hope for so many.

Top chefs from 13 local restaurants used their culinary expertise and imagination in a competition to see who could create the most popular and delicious land (mushroom) and sea (halibut) creations.

All Victorians were invited to "vote with their heart" in crowning their favourite dish. And with

over 2,100 votes cast through the **Times Colonist** website, the winner is **Fireside Grill**.

Two of the region's top chefs, Takashi Ito and Peter Zambri, led the judging and the **Chef's Challenge Cup** went to **Saveur**.

Our Place is so grateful to everyone who made this event such a tremendous success – from everyone who donated hundreds of incredible auction items to all of the local restaurants and their patrons who voted, to **CHEK News** for spreading the word through the Hungry Hearts broadcast.

We could not have done this without you. Thank you!

Our Place John McEown



ADMIRER: The Board of Directors of Our Place Society announced at their September AGM that an Honorary Lifetime Membership has been awarded to John H. McEown for his exemplary donation of time, talents and treasure. Board Chair Allan Saunders and Treasurer Andrea Jakeman-Brown presented him with this honour, and an engraved serving tray recently. Please join us in congratulating John on this well-deserved recognition. John also won a Victoria Leadership Award, nominated by Our Place, with support letters from the Victoria Symphony, Victoria Foundation and United Way Southern Vancouver Island.

Your Help is needed this Winter

Moving into fall and winter, the need to open our Drop-In floor and Nutrition Bar into the evening will add over \$200,000 to our annual budget. To make this possible, we need your help to keep vulnerable people warm, safe and fed during the cold, wet months ahead. If you can help with a financial donation, please visit the website or call:

250-940-5060



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Hope and Belonging

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