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2022

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

Julian's Message

Our Place CEO



There is a sense of optimism in the air as we slowly raise our heads from the burrows of pandemic.

And as I look forward to summer, a new and very positive milestone for Our Place arrives with our first permanent housing site (concept shown left) expected to open on Albina Street in Saanich.

Over the last two years, Our Place staff have been working with over 500 displaced people. We have provided shelter, nutrition, clothing and support, and watched in awe as these folk found belonging and stability in one of our multiple transitional housing sites.

Stabilization is the first step in one's journey to permanent housing, and we are thrilled that soon we will be able to complete the continuum of care that, basically, begins with a cup of coffee.

And we couldn't do it without your support.

Often people look at our community drop-in on Pandora and wonder if it truly helps. The answer is a resounding 'Yes!' People from all walks of life venture into Our Place for a moment of peace, a chance to grab a warm cup of coffee and see what we're all about.

At the Coffee Corner, they are often greeted by a smiling volunteer who may tempt them with a baked treat to go with their drink. They soon find out about access to showers, meals, medical care, clothing, computer lab, library, and more.

Upon seeing that we truly do want to help, they may inquire about shelter or housing. Our skilled and empathetic outreach workers can then do a vulnerability assessment and get them on



BC Housing's accommodation list.

When it opens in August, Albina Street will house 52 people — men and women who have stabilized in transitional housing over the last two years — with 24/7 staff supports, and we hope it will be the first of many such permanent housing projects coming online in the near future.

Summer is also a time of opportunity to step back into the community as an active neighbour. In particular, my thoughts turn to Our Place's participation in such community events as the Moss Street Paint In, Pride Parade, Rib Fest, Canada Day, National Aboriginal Day, courtyard barbecues, baseball games and weekly farmers' markets.

When you see us, be sure to say hello.

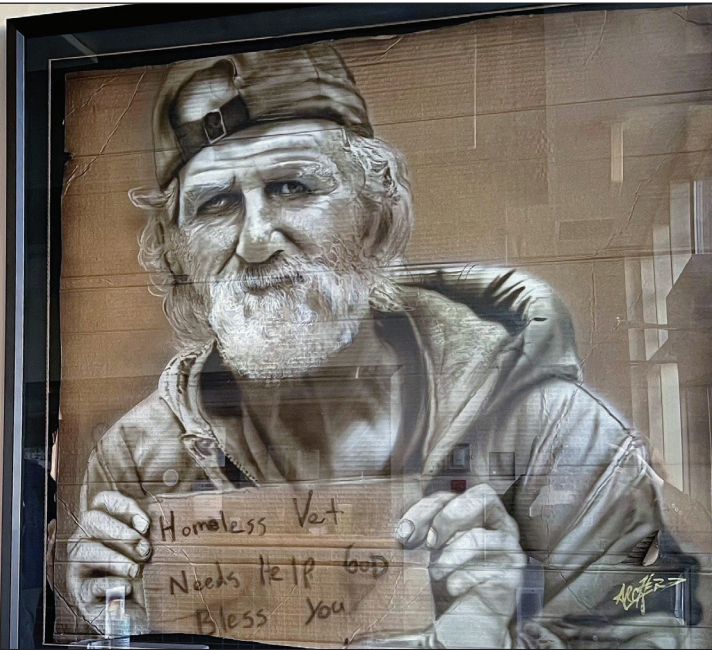
With much gratitude,



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 Blooming

- NEW ART - Local artist Archer loans several of his original works.
- EASTER MEAL - Kitchen staff serve up deliciousness.
- ALBINA STREET - Construction starts strong on new housing site.
- POLE ART - Artist Brian Munro beautifies Pandora Avenue.



Our Family

Dustin's Story

"I knew my sobriety wouldn't last," he says. "And without that, I was never going to see my kids again."

When he was six years old, Dustin's mom remarried and his new step-dad adopted him. It was a new beginning for his family, but unfortunately "my step-dad was not a very nice man," says Dustin, 42.

Violence at the hands of his step-father, ("There were weeks when I couldn't attend school," he says) led to early rebellion. And when Dustin turned 15, his mom gave him up to a foster home in Campbell River.

Instead of finding a loving home, however, his foster parents introduced Dustin to crack cocaine, and his downward spiral intensified.

With little interest in school, Dustin made his way down Island to Victoria where he began living on the streets and selling drugs to get by.

He lived on the streets for two years before returning to Campbell River where he fell for a woman nine years his senior. Together, they had a baby girl.

With the birth of his daughter, Dustin "settled down for a bit." Unfortunately, it didn't last.

After the break-up, Dustin met another

woman and got married. Together, they bought a house from her grandparents and had three more children.

But just as it looked like things were looking stable, a serious work accident on a tugboat — and the pain meds that followed — sent Dustin spiraling again.

"I was confined to a wheelchair for a couple of years," Dustin explains. "I got my foot stuck in a byte (a loop of nautical rope), and it took my left foot nearly off."

A prescription for pain pills became a new addiction that was quickly supplemented by "other things".

Before he knew it, drug consumption consumed his thoughts and took control of his life.

"I used to just take off for weeks on end," he says, "my wife wondering where I was. I got into a dark place because I didn't want to go home high."

Inevitably, Dustin's marriage collapsed.

Alone, with a drug dependency and no

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.



job, Dustin returned to the streets of Victoria. He survived in homeless shelters and tents for 10 years before he ran afoul of the law and was sentenced to seven months in Wilkinson Road jail.

While incarcerated, Dustin got sober and applied for the jail's Right Living Community, a social support program that incorporates role-modelling and peer accountability to encourage positive personal growth.

But when it came time for him to re-enter community, Dustin knew he didn't yet have the necessary tools to be successful.

"I knew my sobriety wouldn't last," he says. "And without that, I was never going to see my kids again."

In jail, Dustin heard of **New Roads**

Therapeutic Recovery Community, an integrated addictions and recovery centre operated by Our Place.

Dustin applied for the voluntary program and on the day of his release was met at Wilkinson prison gates by Le-Ann, New Roads intake manager.

"I can look in the mirror again," he says. "And start to love myself. I couldn't do it before."

Dustin has lived and thrived at New Roads over the last 14 months. He took on the role of Outside Co-ordinator where he works with the chickens ("I call them and they all come running to be fed," he says with a grin) and the fish in the pond.

But the biggest hurdle — winning back the trust of his children — is still a work in progress.

"It's been messy," he admits. "We're talking again, but I've broken promises in the past and I need to rebuild that trust. It's not that I didn't want to be around them; it's that I didn't want them to see me messed up."

His oldest child is 24, his youngest is 6.

Trust is something that haunts Dustin. It was broken early on in his relationship with his mom and step-dad, soured all of his past relationships, and ripped apart the bond with his children.

But through the work he has done on himself at New Roads, he is hoping that this time he can make it right.

Thank you to all our amazing volunteers! We are still recruiting NEW volunteers and 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.

VOLUNTEERS

HAPPY YOU ARE HERE!



Coldest Night

Fundraiser raises over \$100,000 to help extend the hours of vital programs and services





Our Donors

Big Wheel Burger is serving up great food and even greater community support.

Founded in 2011, the restaurant's ownership team had a mission of creating better fast-food options and ensuring that the business tied economic prosperity with giving back to the community.

"We've been a carbon neutral business since 2013 and we launched the Big Wheel Burger Foundation in 2017," says co-owner Calen McNeil. "It's so important that the money we raise from our business stays in, and helps to build the community."

That is why 3% of all food sales each month goes to local community charities including Our Place. 1.5% comes from a charity charge to each customer, while the business matches the other 1.5%.

On top of the matching program, the Big Wheel Burger Community Foundation supports local charities through various donation campaigns. These philanthropic endeavours have provided numerous positive outcomes.

SUPPORT: Big Wheel Burger Management Team and representatives from Our Place Society and PCFSA

"Our commitment to supporting our community has really helped us to find and retain some great talent," says McNeil. "I would say 3 of every five resumes we receive mentions how the job seeker wants to be part of such a positive business model. We have staff who have been with us five years, eight years... and in return we work hard to provide them a living wage and a great work experience."

When asked why Big Wheel Burger supports Our Place in particular, McNeil explains that it is all about the service that the charity provides to those in need. "Our Place programs are immediate, urgent. They help people who are in absolute distress, from meals, clothing and shelter, to medical, addiction and employment services. We want to support those organizations that make the biggest impact with the maximum effect."

Presently the restaurant chain has four locations on Vancouver Island, with two more planned to open by 2023. "We want to keep growing the business so that we can do even more for the communities we operate in. And we're inviting others to join us in our journey."



WE ARE THANKFUL!

Our Place is so thankful to the **Big Wheel Burger Foundation** and all our Great Grantors of 2021. Please see the list below and visit our website: ourplacesociety.com/stories/our-gratitude

GIFT CARDS

We would also like to thank **Thrifty Foods** for their \$9,250 donation in gift cards to be used to feed our community.



< **GREAT GRANTORS OF 2021** : B.C. Housing • B.C. Addictions and Mental Health • Big Wheel Burger Community Foundation • Capital Regional District • City of Victoria • Farmlands Trust Society • Island Health • Province of British Columbia • RBC Foundation • Service Canada New Horizons for Seniors Program • TD Charitable Foundation • Times Colonist Christmas Fund • United Church of Canada Foundation, Gifts with Vision, Seeds of Hope • United Church of Canada, Pacific Mountain Region • Vancouver Foundation • Victoria Foundation (various donor-advised funds)

SAVE THE DATE

Hungry Hearts heating up

We are excited to present the return of Our Place's popular Culinary Gala in September at Delta Hotels by Marriott Victoria Ocean Pointe Resort.

This high-profile food competition event, presented by PwC, has raised an incredible \$1,075,000 for Our Place over the past eight years, and is considered Victoria's favourite culinary fundraiser.

Last year we were able to spotlight our vital programs and services on CHEK Television for our **Hungry Hearts** broadcast, and we're excited to say that the team at CHEK have invited us to produce another show prior to the gala to highlight the work we do for those struggling with poverty and homelessness.

This year, all money raised will go directly to Our Place's Food Security programs to help ensure we can continue to provide over 1,000 nutritious meals a day, every day.

Hungry Hearts will feature our Best of the Region auctions

with over 200 items from hotel stays, golf packages, pet baskets, electronics, health, beauty, art and home décor.

Ticket sales to the gala are limited, but you don't need to attend the gala to get in on the auction.

Savour the Dates:

- **Aug. 26: Best of the Region Auctions go live for viewing**
- **Aug. 29: Auction bidding begins**
- **Sept. 3: Hungry Hearts broadcast on CHEK Television**
- **Sept. 10: Hungry Hearts Culinary Gala**
- **Sept. 10: Best of the Region Auction ends**

For more information, go to www.ourplacesociety.com/events/hungry-hearts-2022



Chefs Takashi Ito and Peter Zambri

Our Place Recycling



SAVE YOUR BOTTLES

CREATE CHANGE

it makes cents

July is Our Place Month at Bottle Depot!

Drop off your returnables this **July** at **Bottle Depot Charity Bin locations** and 100% of the refund will go to help Our Place

Charity bin locations:

4261 Glanford Avenue

655 Queens Avenue

3961 Quadra Avenue

94 Talcott Avenue in View Royal

Please spread the word & share!

Ways to Give

You can bring hope, belonging and nourishment with your online gift at ourplacesociety.com/donate or mailing a cheque to 919 Pandora Ave., Victoria BC V8V 3P4, or call us anytime!

Make a Donation

To speak with us regarding financial donations, address updates or tax receipt questions, please call:

250-940-5060

 **ourplace**
Hope and Belonging

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