



ourplace

Hope and Belonging

nourish
hope



The Reality of Pandora



By Julian Daly

I'm not going to sugarcoat it, the 900 block of Pandora Ave in Victoria where Our Place has its community centre can be a distressing and scary place.

When I walk down Pandora, as I do every day, I see people sprawled out on the sidewalks, slipping in and out of consciousness, and my heart breaks. I consciously check they are breathing, that their skin isn't turning blue from drug poisoning, knowing how many have died on our streets.

I see the despair, just as you do, and it fills me with the same sense of anger, frustration and concern as I'm sure fills you.

I receive phone calls and messages almost daily from people who want us to do more, who say we are to blame for what's happening on Pandora, or that we somehow enable and support it. The sad fact is that while we have control over what happens inside our building – which is a safe and well managed space providing meals, washrooms and medical supports – we have no control or jurisdiction over what happens outside our doors. Only the police and bylaw have jurisdiction there.

Frankly, I am as powerless to do anything about the systemic issues – unattended to mental health and addictions, and lack of appropriate housing – as any member of the public. Every staff member and volunteer at Our Place, perhaps more than anyone, wants to see a better outcome for those who are existing rough on Pandora. But all we can do is continue to raise our voices, pleading for more supports: housing, detox, recovery beds, complex care – even involuntary care for those folk whose needs are beyond our expertise.

It is only when these systemic issues are addressed that we will see real change on the block. The reality is we are in the middle of a crisis, and we need, as a whole society, to recognize it for what it is – and act.

If you could hold up a crystal ball and show a five-year-old that in 30 years they would be spread-eagled on a sidewalk, digging raw fingers into cracks in the sidewalk to find a crumb of spilled Meth, would they choose that life? I don't believe so but, as a society, we aren't providing any escape.

If we continue down this road, the death rate will climb, criminality will increase, and despair will deepen.

Abandoning people to their addictions and mental health breakdowns on our streets is no longer tenable. We need to do more. We need to provide a way out for folk – and, believe me, most want it – a route to a better life.

In short, we need to treat the disease, not just the symptoms.

- Julian Daly is the CEO of Our Place Society

On Remembrance Day, and always, we respectfully honour the veterans who have courageously served, and continue to serve, our country during times of war, conflict and peace. Our Place is proud to display three works of art at our 919 Pandora community centre by local artist Paul Archer, who has portrayed the plight of veterans facing homelessness.



NOURISHING HOPE IN LIVES

To donate to Our Place Society
please call 250-940-5060,
email donors@ourplacesociety.com,
or visit us at ourplacesociety.com/donate

TV SCENE INSIDE

What gives you hope every day?

We asked members of our management team what hope at Our Place means to them:

“

Julian Daly,
Chief Executive Officer
(2 year OPS employee)

I am filled with hope when I speak with family members (clients) who have every reason to feel hopeless and give up on life but who, with support from us, keep going and make real changes in their lives, for the better. Their courage, determination and resilience gives me hope, personally and professionally. Their hope becomes my hope.



Jordan Cooper, ▲
Director of Services
(16 year OPS employee)

Hope for me comes from the family members themselves. To see family members, tackle each day despite their situation, challenges and barriers is inspiring. There is hope for each individual that Our Place supports. I have learned over the last 20 years in this work that people will surprise you. The person that may seem like the most “hopeless” will often be the one that is able to overcome incredible odds and improve their life.



Bob Frank, ▲
Manager of Facilities
(20 year OPS employee)

Through the Love we are able to offer; we can awaken Love in those we serve. Working at Our Place Society allows me a platform to experience this.

Dawn Barr,
Manager of Volunteers
(4 year OPS employee)

Our incredible volunteers are amazing people who bring their time and talents into each role every day with renewed hope and enthusiasm for making a difference in the lives of others.

Leah Young, Director of Housing & Shelters (8 year OPS employee)

Hope for me comes from seeing the work being done by the housing supportive staff. Everyday I see and read how staff work alongside residents to be connected to much needed services; to be there for someone in a time of need; accept individuals unconditionally; advocate for residents and support them in staying housed; and experience both joy and anguish with residents. I continue to come into work everyday as I know that staff inspire hope for those we serve.

“We must accept finite disappointment, but never lose infinite hope.”

– Martin Luther King, Jr.



Cathy Mingo, ▲
Manager of Housing & Shelters
(2 year OPS employee)

Watching the face of a resident at one of our housing sites, as they told me that they have found market rental housing and will be moving to be closer to their family, gives me hope. They were so animated, smiling a smile of sheer relief, happiness, and wonder. I found myself smiling with them, caught up in the joyous moment. Hope exists in all our residents' hearts and minds and we, with time, are brought into their world to share such life-changing hopeful events such as this. Hope is often a memory or a fleeting dream but when realized, life-changing.

Adam Flegel,
Manager of the Community Centre
(3 month OPS employee)

Hope is a word that means potential and resilience. I believe that everyone has this no matter the circumstances. Hope is seeing humility in everyone and recognizing the greatness that can be contributed to the world.

Lee Sundquist,
Manager of New Roads
(1 year OPS employee)

What brings me hope is when I see the light come back into someone's eyes and they move away from the darkness and despair of their addiction and towards a life and future in recovery!



Grant McKenzie, ▲
Director of Communications
(10 year OPS employee)

I find hope in my daily interactions with people on the street. The big picture is daunting, so I focus on making a difference in individuals. It can be anything from taking the time to chat, getting a bus pass for them, connecting them with a paramedic or even just letting them know about a special meal.

”

Celebrate Giving Tuesday

GivingTuesday is on November 29, and it's the world's largest generosity movement. Whether it's making someone smile, helping a stranger, or giving to those who need our help, every act of generosity counts, and everyone has something to give.

On GivingTuesday, we encourage you to consider the needs of your less fortunate neighbours, whom we call our family members at Our Place. This year, proceeds from GivingTuesday donations will go towards the Hope Fund. This is an "emergency" fund that Our Place staff can access on behalf of our family members for items that go over and above what they can afford, but are necessities for moving forward in a healthy way.

During the past year, the Hope Fund was used for:

- An eye exam
- Medication for a pet
- Food Safe certification for a job
- First aid training
- Supplies for job interviews
- Birth certificates for proper ID

The Hope Fund was created in honour of Jill Cater, a strong and courageous woman who touched the lives of so many of at Our Place. Jill was an inspiration to everyone who met her. From living on the streets and becoming addicted to heroin, Jill never gave up. With the help of Our Place, and through her own incredible determination, Jill became a community leader through her work

at S.O.L.I.D. (Society of Living Illicit Drug Users), volunteering at Our Place, and even serving on the Our Place Board of Directors. Sadly, Jill passed away from cancer in July 2017. Jill encapsulated everything we wish for our family members: strength, courage, humour and love.

You can help share and honour her memory, and bring smiles and joy to many by giving the people we serve a hand up with a donation to the Hope Fund this GivingTuesday. To make a donation, please visit **ourplacesociety.com/givingtuesday**, or call **250-940-5060**.



The late Jill Cater of the Memorial Hope fund that bears her name



With diverse backgrounds, our Board members continually impress me with their depth of commitment to Our Place. The Hope Fund honours someone who was a committed Board member and more. Jill Cater was an Our Place family member and a long-time volunteer, before coming onto the Board. Says former Chair Diana Butler, "She was remarkable in many ways. She was also a special and effective Board member, bringing important perspectives and experiences to the Board." While still on

the Board, we lost her within weeks of her cancer diagnosis. The Hope Fund is such a fitting tribute to someone known for her raw honesty and practical caring. The fund gives outreach workers the ability to access quick funds for a pair of work boots or clothing, and other necessities for the street community as they see fit. Thanks to all who support this fund. And thank you, Jill.

- Allan Saunders, Board Chair



From its humble beginnings as a simple downtown Victoria refuge, Our Place has grown from an inner-city community centre to employing 275+ staff and 300+ volunteers who operate a continuum of critical services in 10 locations throughout the CRD.

- 919 Pandora Avenue
- Muncey Place on Blanshard Street
- Capital City Centre Hotel on Douglas Street
- Howard Johnson Hotel on Gorge Road
- Tiny Homes Village on Caledonia Avenue

- Russell Street Shelter
- My Place Shelter on Yates Street
- New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community in View Royal
- Jaymac Place Recovery Home in Saanich
- Our WorkPlace on Quadra Street

CBC Radio & Our Place present
A dramatic reading of Charles Dickens' Classic Tale

A Christmas Carol

Friday, Dec. 9, 2022

7:00pm Live Event

First Met United Church

932 Balmoral Rd, Victoria

Tickets: \$15.⁰⁰ individual
\$35.⁰⁰ family
\$15.⁰⁰ virtual link

Feel the Christmas Spirit and give back
in service to our community

Buy tickets: ourplacesociety.com/christmascarol

Featuring CBC Personalities & Special Guests, including:



Bob McDonald



Gregor Craigie



Liz McArthur



Rohit Joseph



Kathryn Marlow

We are excited to announce that Jack Knox of the Times Colonist
and Joe Perkins of CHEK News will be our guest celebrity readers!
Also featuring the music of the West Coast Reach Choir

All proceeds to benefit Our Place Society



Hope and Belonging



Pacific Centre
Family Services Association

Coldest Night
of the Year
2023

SAVE THE DATES:

WALKATHON SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 25

REGISTRATION BEGINS THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3RD

The Coldest Night of the Year is a winterrific family-friendly walk to raise money for local charities serving people experiencing hurt, hunger, and homelessness. This year, Our Place Society and Pacific Centre Family Services Association are hosting in-person events.

Sign up a team, promote the walk, donate and step up for your neighbours in need. for more info. call Steven at 250-940-5064 or go to our website.

www.ourplacesociety.com

A very special thank you to the Food Security Champions who helped us cover costs for the fall when inflation began to hit us very hard. But we still need your help!

Please consider contributing to the hot meals and holiday meals planned for the months ahead, or even sponsoring a full meal service. Rising food costs make it a challenge to serve over 800 meals a day to those facing poverty and homelessness in our community.

Please call us at **250-940-5060** to make a donation, or visit ourplacesociety.com.

Thank you for your compassion!

We would like to gratefully acknowledge this summer's Food Security Champions:

Barry & Shelby Andruschak
Paul & Judy Barron
Angela Bassage & Terry Scandrett
Geoff Burian
Jim & Lynne Butler
Jane Cassie
Anne & George Clark
Lynda & Leigh Clarke
Martha Cockell
Wendy Clay
Brad Doney
Marianne & Robert Eng

Tori Feldman
Tom Gleeson
Gayle Good
Fernande Harrison
Kathy & Jim Hartshorne
Bonnie & Eugene Hetherington
Evelyn Herkner
Heather-Ann Heyd
Benjamin Holt
Peter & Patricia Hopkinson
Elaine Jones
Raymond Kong

Lynne & Gary Laidlaw
Andree Lambert-Dubois
Brooke & Chris Lefebvre
Dale Lowden
Bruce MacKenzie & Sarah Zimmerman
Peter & Helen Malcolm
Craig McInnes
Judith Hinton McRorie
Rob Miller
Adeleine Morris
Alexina Murphy
Kieka Mynhardt

Sara Neely
Bruce Nobbs
Dianne & Allan Peachman
Nancy Poole
Jeff & Mary Pottinger
Tom & Myrna Pringle
Heather Schander
Diane Scott
Eileen Skinnider
Marie Skinnider
Tracey & Bill Smith
Terry Smollett

Frances Stetson
H. Stuart
William & Barbara Taylor
David & Joanne Thomas
Grant True
Judith Trueman
Paul & Debbie Tuit
Julie Webster
Tony White
Dave Wightman
Norma Wuester
+ Anonymous Donors