



nourish
hope



There are Angels among us



Julian Daly, CEO, Our Place Society

We can't do all of this work without you! We are truly grateful to everyone who contributes to Our Place and helps us nourish hope in our community. Consider donating today – make a onetime donation, become a monthly donor, leave a legacy in your will, or make a donation of time by giving us a call at 250-940-5060, emailing us at donors@ourplacesociety.com, or visiting us at ourplacesociety.com/donate.

This might sound a little odd, but part of what brings me to work every day is the knowledge that good people, angels really, surround me. When I'm feeling down or overwhelmed by the challenge of bringing dignity and hope to a struggling population, I find myself stopping on Pandora and truly looking around.

The angels are everywhere.

Some are checking on people in tents to make sure they survived the night, others are busy in the Our Place kitchen flipping flapjacks, frying sausages, and getting vats of orange juice ready. Some angels are cleaning shower stalls and fluffing towels, getting ready for the daily rush. Others, such as our crack-of-the-morning volunteers, are already making people laugh as they serve up coffee and tea.

Even the pharmacies are open early to make sure those combating the struggle of addiction can get opioid-agnostic therapy. For those who are still trapped in their

addiction, workers at the two nearby Supervised Consumption Sites are ready to greet them with compassion and care.

Angels take on different forms. Some live among the street population, doing what they can to support friends and family; others use their voices to persuade our governments that more needs to be done; many donate money to support our programs and services; others champion their workplace to sponsor and serve a meal; some simply share a smile rather than a frown when they meet someone who is struggling to get through the day.

With Christmas fast approaching, we uncover one of my favourite Our Place programs, Angel Gifts. Church groups work with our Wellness team to provide Angel Gifts to those who use our services. This is a special present bought just for them. We provide an age, shirt size and gender, and the church groups purchase and wrap a gift so that everyone, no matter how precarious

their situation, has something to celebrate this holiday. And very often this is the only gift that some people will receive.

School groups and families also join in with enthusiasm with sock drives and clothing drives as students eagerly learn about compassion and empathy.

Each of these things may seem small, but their impact is anything but. Each job, each task, each gift is a declaration of compassion and love. And isn't that incredible? People telling other people they care, even at times when that other person is so broken, they don't realize what a gift they are being given.

And when I think that most of these angels share this compassion for others every single day of the year, I am humbled, and I am blessed.

Merry Christmas everyone.

Julian Daly is the CEO of Our Place Society

NOURISHING HOPE IN LIVES TODAY!

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

The Chefs of Our Place

Meet some of the cooks who feed our community's most vulnerable

Food has the amazing gift of bringing us together. Gathering for a meal and sharing with others around us is a universally joyful experience. Here at Our Place it's no different. Serving over 1,400 meals a day, 365 days a year, is no easy feat – but we love doing it because we know that for those we serve, it means so much more than just food on a plate. It's a chance for people to seek some comfort and feel they are a part of something more than the troubles they face each and every day. So, who are the people behind the counter creating hundreds of meals a day? Please take a moment to meet some of them here. Together with **Casey, Mike, Danika, Jenna, Leah, Jackson, and William**, they share their love of food with those we serve every day.



Brian Cox
Our Place Food Services Manager
Brian is a familiar face to many – he's been making meals at Our Place for over 30 years.

Brian puts his heart and soul into the food he creates, and it shows. He purposely creates the most nutritiously dense meals as possible, working with a dietitian to make sure the balance is the best it can be. "I throw in everything I can that people wouldn't normally eat separately, like spinach, squash, beans, lentils, all that good stuff," says Brian. "We're always integrating local farm produce into the recipes we make. Anyone have any ideas of what to do with the 400 pumpkins out back? We'll come up with something!"

The chefs and cooks that work with Brian at the Pandora community centre and at other Our Place locations share Brian's creativity, and care, with the meals they make for the people we serve.

Erica
919 Pandora Community Centre
Erica worked in restaurants for many years before coming to Our Place eight

years ago. "Seeing the people who I cook for every day and interacting with them is really what keeps me here," says Erica. "It's really rewarding. There's some people I've seen almost every day for the past eight years, and we definitely have a connection." A Red Seal trained chef, the biggest compliment Erica's ever received at Our Place is being told her meal was "just like my mom used to make it."

Adds Erica, "We are the people there when some of them are going through the hardest times of their lives. That home cooked meal we provide means everything sometimes. My goal every day is to provide 15 minutes of dignity for someone. It feels like a real privilege to be able to do that, and it feeds my soul to feed other people."

RECIPE

ERICA'S SPLIT PEA SOUP

6 cups vegetable broth
2 cups dried split peas
1 onion, chopped
1 cup carrots, chopped
1 cup celery, chopped
Salt and pepper
Oil to saute vegetables

INSTRUCTIONS

Saute carrots, celery, and onions until the onions are translucent. Season with salt and pepper.

Add broth and peas.

Simmer until peas dissolve and form a thick soup.

Adjust salt and pepper, if needed.



Kirk Capital City Centre

After 20 years "hiding in the back" at different local restaurants, Kirk started in the kitchen at Our Place's New Roads (then Choices) seven years ago before working at our transitional shelter My Place, then the kitchen at Pandora. Now, Kirk has been starting up the new kitchen at the Capital City Centre (CCC) site. But, it wasn't until he cooked in the Pandora kitchen that he felt the true impact of the work he's doing here at Our Place.

"When you see hundreds of people coming through for every meal, every day, it's pretty frantic," Kirk says. "I didn't realize the scope of it all, how many people we're helping, how many people really need it. That escaped me until I worked at Pandora. I'm a completely different person because of it."

Kirk prides himself in cooking as much from scratch as possible and is eager to serve the 90 residents at CCC. "Imagine you're putting out something to someone that's from you, and they notice and appreciate that." He adds: "You see a lot of inspirational stuff, aside from all the pain and suffering. There's pockets of inspiration you see every day."



RECIPE

KIRK'S BROWNIES

1/2 cup butter
1 cup white sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/3 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
1/2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking powder

FROSTING:

3 tablespoons butter, softened
3 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
1 tablespoon honey
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup confectioners' sugar

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C). Grease and flour an 8-inch square pan. Melt 1/2 cup butter in a large saucepan. Remove from heat, and stir in sugar, eggs, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Beat in 1/3 cup cocoa, flour, salt, and baking powder. Spread batter into prepared pan. Bake in the preheated oven until top is dry and edges have started to pull away from the sides of the pan, about 25 to 30 minutes. Let cool briefly before frosting.

To make the frosting: Combine softened butter, confectioners' sugar, 3 tablespoons cocoa, honey, and 1 teaspoon vanilla extract in a bowl. Stir until smooth. Frost brownies while they are still warm.



Nancy, My Place Transitional Shelter



After the hustle and bustle of a lifetime spent working in kitchens, including her family's restaurants, 67-year-old Nancy has been cooking at Our Place for six years, most recently at My Place on Yates where she prepares breakfast, lunch and dinner for the 55 residents who live there.

"It's really nice here, I really enjoy preparing home cooked meals for people that I know they enjoy," says Nancy. "It's a challenge to come up with things every day that people can eat. They love my chili and chicken Caesar wraps and coleslaw because I make it so they can eat it." Adds Nancy through a gap-toothed grin: "A lot of people have teeth and mouth issues, just like me, but that's no excuse and I tell them that every day. If I can chew it, they can chew it, so come on and eat your vegetables!"

RECIPE

NANCY'S CHICKEN CAESAR WRAP

1 cup chopped romaine lettuce
1 slice thick cut bacon, cooked and crumbled
1/2 cup cooked, shredded chicken
2 tablespoons Caesar dressing
1 tablespoon Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup croutons
1 large flour tortilla

INSTRUCTIONS

In a bowl, combine the romaine, bacon, chicken, dressing and Parmesan. Stir to combine.

Roughly chop the croutons, then stir them into the filling mixture.

Microwave the tortilla for 10-15 seconds so that it will be easy to roll. Spread the lettuce mixture down the middle of the tortilla. Fold in the two sides of the tortilla, then roll up like a burrito.

Cut wrap in half to serve.

Zeno, New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community

Zeno heads up the kitchen at New Roads where, for the past two years, he's mentored the 35 residents by teaching them the skills necessary for feeding and caring for themselves outside of recovery. A Red Seal chef with a history in fine dining at places like the Union Club and the Victoria Golf Club, Zeno made the decision to move away from that sector and hasn't looked back.

"There's an opportunity here to help people, and I like seeing the growth in the guys," says Zeno. "I like the teaching aspect, to be able to teach them simple things. If I can share a bit of knowledge and experience with them, those are lessons that they might actually take away when they leave here."

Zeno supervises a kitchen crew made up of the residents – two coordinators, four cooks, three dishwashers, and one stocker who spend a couple of hours each day preparing the day's meals, and learning invaluable skills from Zeno and each other. Zeno adds: "It's like reinventing simple lessons in life through food."

RECIPE

ZENO'S CHARRED BRUSSELS SPROUTS (FEEDS 30)

5 lbs Brussels sprouts
2 cups diced shallots
2 cups chopped walnuts or pecans
2 cups dried cranberries
1/4 cup oil
1/4 cup balsamic reduction
Salt and pepper

INSTRUCTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°F. Wash and cut Brussels sprouts, then toss with oil, salt and pepper. Roast until slightly charred (about 20 min). Add chopped shallots, cranberries and nuts, and continue roasting until well charred (another 10 - 15 minutes). Finish with balsamic reduction. Serve hot or room temperature. Enjoy!



With the 2022 harvest complete Farmlands Trust grew 12,912 pounds of fresh local produce at Newman Farms on the Peninsula and donated it all to Our Place Society kitchens! As the largest local farm supplier of produce to Our Place, Farmlands Trust succeeded in linking food production to aid in mitigating poverty and food insecurity. Since 2014, their "field to plate" initiative shared with Our Place has grown 102,684 pounds of produce, worth a whopping \$315,660! Priceless. That's a lot of bellies getting their greens because of Farmlands Trust! We are truly grateful for the abundance of nutrition provided by this generous "charity helping out another charity", and ultimately helping to provide invaluable nutrition that folks might not otherwise get. You can sign up to volunteer, donate, or learn more at farmlandstrust.org.



Please Step Up for the Coldest Night of the Year

Now is the time to join Our Place Society in support of those facing poverty and homelessness during these winter months. Each step we take brings someone closer to safety, health, and shelter. Your support and your collected donations nourish hope and help make next steps possible.

“Even as we see so many of our neighbours struggle this time of year, the Coldest Night campaign demonstrates to us the hope and compassion our community brings with them on the night,” says Steven Seltzer, Victoria event director.

The popular walkathon returns Saturday, February 25. We invite you to team up, issue challenges, fundraise, walk, and gather for good... because it's cold out there!

We are proud to offer families, teams, faith, work, school and community

groups the opportunity to walk in solidarity and raise awareness and funds to help serve the hungry, homeless, and hurting people in our community. Coldest Night has become one of the country's most successful community action campaigns and last year we were able to raise over \$100,000 for our neighbours in need. People can sign up at <https://cnoy.org/location/victoriapandora> for the downtown walk and <https://cnoy.org/location/victoriawestshore> for the Langford walk (in partnership with Pacific Centre Family Services Association), starting at Starlight Stadium.

Like other years, we will have family friendly activities, group warmups, warm toques, and warmer bowls of chili (for those who fundraise).

For more information, email Steven at stevens@ourplacesociety.com

Find some great holiday gift ideas. From a Tim Hortons gift card to a travel voucher with VIA Rail - With all proceeds going to Our Place and our vital programs and services.

Check out the items on December 1st. Bidding opens on December 5th and closes on the 11th. Go to www.hibid.ca

Dickens!

The return of the Christmas Carol performance on December 9 is about more than the live reading of a Christmas classic. It's about coming together to share a message of love and fellowship in support of so many in our neighbourhood who desperately need and deserve those feelings.

“This is traditionally a very difficult, triggering time of year, for those we serve,” says Our Place CEO Julian Daly. “This event is a chance to bring a little light into the darkness as well as raise some money so that we can continue to serve those who are going through tough times, particularly at Christmas time.”

This year's production brings together local media personalities, including CBC's Bob McDonald, Gregor Craigie, Liz McArthur, Rohit Joseph and Kathryn Marlow, the Times Colonist's Jack Knox and CHEK News' Joe Perkins. The audience will also enjoy performances by the West Coast Reach Choir and the Canadian College of Performing Arts Alumni. Special thanks to our host, First Met United Church,

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

and to all who support Our Place Society and the community that the charity serves.

Tickets are still available to either attend the performance at First Met or to watch virtually via a live-stream. This special event promises to be a heart-warming evening for the whole family. For more information and to purchase tickets, go to www.ourplacesociety.com/christmascarol.



Wishing you
a joyful holiday season!

OUR PLACE SOCIETY'S CHRISTMAS AUCTION