



Above the hum of voices in the cafeteria, and the clatter of metal chaffing dishes, an elderly man says a quiet and dignified, “Thank you,” as he picks up his breakfast from the serving hatch. Behind him, the line-up snakes through the crowded tables and chairs.

The people waiting patiently for breakfast are a diverse crowd. Some have jobs but live below the poverty line. Others are seniors who are no longer able to make ends meet due to runaway inflation. Still others are in the throes of addiction or a mental health crisis. One thing they all have in common – they rely on Our Place Society for support.

Standing behind the serving hatch and dishing out food from the Our Place kitchens can be a powerful and humbling experience. As Nicole, a PECSF member, notes, “I know I’m privileged to be working for the government, but we as people can tend to forget about what’s actually happening in our own community, if it’s not going on outside our front door. Going downtown early in the morning and seeing people who are living in tents and accessing services at Our Place is eye opening.”

So often, on social media and in the news, we’re exposed to negative narratives about the vulnerable people along Pandora and throughout the downtown core. These notions can be difficult to shake, but volunteering at the Our Place community centre can help reawaken our compassion. Handing over a plate of pancakes and sausages, and receiving a bright smile in return, reminds us that these people are human beings. As Nicole puts it, “having that connection helps you to help your own community.” She adds that the people coming in for breakfast are “super friendly and full of thanks,” and she “would absolutely do it again!”

Our Place Society serves over 1,200 meals each day, 365 days a year. Coming in for a meal is often our first point of connection with someone, and an opportunity to link them up with our other services: a hot shower; a visit with a doctor; free clothing; addiction recovery support; a bed in a shelter, and so much more. Every day, we strive to give people hope and a sense of belonging.

We couldn’t do this work without the ongoing support of organizations like PECSF. Your funding helps us ensure we can continue to serve balanced, nutritious meals in our dining hall. If you’d like to see your gift in action, please come and take a tour of our Pandora community centre, where we run many of our programs. Contact Melissa at melissam@ourplacesociety.com to arrange a visit. We’d love to show you around. You can also learn more about the work that Our Place does by tuning in to our podcast, Heart of the Matter, which is available on our website or your favourite podcast app.

Thank you for your generosity of spirit. By supporting Our Place, you’re helping to create a more equitable and just society where everyone has access to the support they need.