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

Julian's Message

Our Place CEO

The sad, hard reality is not everyone will be successful in housing unless we change the current model.

Recently, Our Place closed down two of its housing sites — Russell Street, a temporary shelter; and temporary housing at the leased Howard Johnson hotel.

While those closures may sound like bad news, the upside is that we moved every resident into permanent housing with more 24/7 supports. This was always the promise to both the residents and the community.

Temporary housing sites were a much-needed necessity when so many people found themselves isolated and on the streets during COVID. The trouble was that, due to their very nature, delivering supports and services was difficult.

For one, the re-purposed hotels were not built for the complex challenges of the people we serve. And two: there was very little, if any, funds available to bring in the necessary resources.

With permanent housing, we can fix that. In fact, within the first week of moving into our permanent housing facility in Saanich, knowing they finally had a real home, three residents entered detox and recovery.

Every studio apartment at Albina Street has direct communication to staff if a problem arises; we have a medical room, laundry facilities, state-of-the-art kitchen, garden and community space, and invested staff who are eager to teach life skills.

Temporary housing taught us a lot over the last three years. It showed us how the makeup of the residents (mix of high needs and low needs) makes all the difference. But it also showed us how complex even that can be. We see the need for sober housing,

low-barrier housing, women-only housing, couples housing, and housing with a lot more mental health supports.

It also taught us that despite our best intentions, we can't help everyone. We can only really help those who actively want to be helped.

Those who refuse help and are on the streets because their mental health and addiction challenges are beyond our ability showed us they need much more than 'harm reduction' interventions.

Appropriate care will require a new model that includes psychiatric, mental health and trauma experts, appropriate number of treatment and recovery beds, and some form of involuntary institutionalization.

The solution isn't easy, but it does exist, and it is our responsibility to pursue it.

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



- EASTER - Easter Bunny Adam helped serve our festive lunch.
- BEAUTY DAY - Thanks to The Natural Hair Salon.
- NEW SIGNAGE - Upcycling an old sign at CCC hotel; recycling a used sign to brand New Roads; Remembering all those who have died of toxic drugs.



Our Family

Normand's Story

"People want to put you down, say you're not smart. You have to build a sense of survival."

Normand — known on the streets of Victoria as The Poet — is a man who feels immensely. His thoughts come to him in poetry, the words complete with intense emotion.

Born in Quebec some 62 years ago, Normand was the 4th of 7 children, but always felt like an outsider.

"My childhood was very harsh ... tough," he says. "I'm a rebel by nature. In my family, I was the black sheep."

That rebellious streak saw Normand attend reform school at the age of 7, and enter foster care at the age of 10.

Reform school wasn't a happy place as "most of the teachers were in the midst of a breakdown," says Normand. "They all seemed depressed."

Depression is also how Normand ended up in foster care as his mother suffered from the malady and his father struggled to cope with all the children.

At the age of 12, Normand was given the choice of continuing in foster care or returning home to his parents. He chose to return home.

"In order to be part of the home, I had to support myself and become one of the main people who took care of the home."

Normand became a skilled cleaner — "laundry, sweep the floor, wash the walls, windows, the garden, pretty much

everything" — keeping both the inside and the outside of the home in top shape. It was a skill that he would come to rely on throughout his life.

At school, he faced further struggles as "people want to put you down, say you're not smart, things like that. You have to build a sense of survival to go through that, to keep your head up."

After school, Normand enrolled in a coaching program to help "get my life back together" and understand what direction he wanted to go.

"I had social issues," he says. "And needed to learn how to build up trust in a workplace environment otherwise you're screwed for life."

Fortunately, he had an ingrained work ethic and learned skills from keeping the family home clean. He also picked up carpentry skills from his father, a professional carpenter and housing contractor.

And while Normand worked for his father for a bit, the relationship was strained.

"I was still the black sheep back then," he says.

Despite all this hardship, Normand found solace — and romanticism — in his own writing.



IN MEMORY

HIS SWEAT AND TEARS ARE IN
OUR PLACE'S FOUNDATION

Dr. Robert (Robin) Krause, who died peacefully at home at 97 years, carried a vision for the well-being of our most marginalized citizens.

"Robin was a friend and chair of the Open Door ministry," say Rev. Allen Tysick, former executive director of Our Place.

"He negotiated the amalgamation of the Open Door Ministry and the Upper Room to become Our Place. His sweat and tears are in Our Place's foundation."

Before the creation of Our Place in 2005, Krause served as chair of Open Door for 10 years.



"I was creative from an early age," he says. "Writing fairytales and stories from the age of nine."

Unfortunately, young Normand's creativity was forced into the closet as people accused him of showing off.

The turmoil is clear in his voice as Normand explains, "When you have a gift, it is both a blessing and a curse. I gave up on it many times, but always returned."

As an adult, Normand began exploring his talents further and, having fallen in love, found a deep connection with romantic poetry.

When he turned 30, Normand's mother

passed away, and he decided it was time to leave Quebec. At first, he travelled to France and Spain before choosing Victoria. When he landed on Vancouver Island, he didn't speak English.

Enrolling in an ESL (English as a Second Language) course at Camosun College, Normand began to explore his new world. He organized a chess club, rallied to build a new gymnasium, and joined the student council.

During this time, he worked as a dishwasher, cleaner, and carpenter, but conflict at work and school made things slide sideways and he found himself struggling to pay rent.

In the gap between losing his job and claiming Employment Insurance, Normand lost his housing. He ended up living on the streets of Victoria and going to Our Place for meals.

"I already knew about Our Place," he says. "When I had no money, that's where I would eat."

Life on the street was difficult. Normand faced a lot of theft and violence as people saw him as an easy mark.

"It's not easy being a poet when you have to raise your fists."

Fortunately, Normand has found a home in supportive housing and is excited to be using his gift to perform poetry readings in public and publishing in local magazines.

He has plans to write several books, including one on Romanticism, a book of poetry about hardship, and a book of thoughts.

"I want to unify people," he says, "rather than divide."

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

850 walkers, 115 teams
& 65 volunteers joined Our Place
and PCFSA staff & dignitaries
for annual fundraiser in
Victoria and the WestShore





Our Donors

John Knappett, founder and president of Knappett Projects Inc, one of the largest construction companies on Vancouver Island, has always believed in the importance of supporting local non-profits.

When Knappett started working out of his basement as a small contractor in 1983, he began donating to different community organizations.

"On a more modest scale initially," says Knappett. "We've scaled it up as the company has succeeded."

For Knappett, homelessness and mental health are key issues. He saw first-hand how difficult it can be for people to access help when a close family member experienced serious mental health challenges.

"It's as devastating as a cancer diagnosis, but we don't treat it," he says. "Instead, we put people on the street and expect the police to deal with it. It's not working, it's got to change. We support people in the community who are trying to make a

KNAPPETT: Knappett Projects leadership team.

difference, like Our Place."

Despite his unflagging loyalty to his community, Knappett admits that it isn't always easy.

"It's certainly got its challenges," he explains. "It's frustrating to drive by and see all the people on the street ... but without community support, it would be worse. That's why we do it. We'll continue to do it and I hope that other community members are concerned enough that they get involved and help make a difference."

In addition to Knappett Projects' generous support of Our Place, they support numerous other non-profits around the Greater Victoria area.

Speaking directly to other business owners, Knappett urges them to take action.

"You need to support the community that you work and live in. In order for us to all live in a society that's suitable for our children to grow up in, we need to support the social fabric of our society. It's not something you can leave to government or other people — you need to get involved."



a legacy of love

Provide hope and belonging for the future

CREATE YOUR LEGACY OF LOVE : As well as your loved ones, please consider a gift to Our Place Society in your will. Your thoughtfulness will make a lasting difference to those experiencing poverty, homelessness, physical and mental health issues, and addictions. For a confidential conversation about giving options and the tax savings — please contact Diana Gallivan: 250-940-5063 or legacy@ourplacesociety.com.



THE HEART OF THE MATTER

We've launched a podcast! Hear local experts discuss vital issues around homelessness, addiction, and mental health in our Greater Victoria communities.

Guests include: Victoria Police Chief Del Manak, MLA Grace Lore, Emergency Room Doctor Fred Voon, and Victoria Chamber CEO Bruce Williams. New episodes added every few weeks!

Find them at ourplacesociety.com, or as podcasts on Anchor FM, Apple, Google, Amazon, Spotify, and others.

For questions and to suggest guests, please email melissam@ourplacesociety.com.



OUR PLACE AND PWC PRESENT:

Hungry Hearts

Nine years ago, Hungry Hearts started out as a soup and sandwich competition amongst five local restaurants in support of Our Place. Since then, Hungry Hearts has grown into one of the region's favourite culinary gala fundraisers, attracting a VIP crowd of over 200 last year, alongside top local chefs and their staff. The event supports the vital programs and services we provide to those struggling with poverty and homelessness in our community. As Hungry Hearts has grown, so has Our Place - we're now the largest drop-in meal service in Greater Victoria.

We hope you can join us for the gala, bid on great items from our best of the region auction and tune in to our CHEK TV broadcast. We're so excited to share this special event with you!

AUG 28: BEST OF REGION AUCTION
SEPT 2: CHEK BROADCAST
SEPT 9: HUNGRY HEARTS GALA



TO PURCHASE TICKETS AND CHECK OUT
 OUR FANTASTIC AUCTION, GO TO
[HTTPS://HIBID.CA/EVENTS/HUNGRY-
 HEARTS-2023](https://hibid.ca/events/hungry-hearts-2023)

Events

- **Sunday, July 9:** Cheer on Our Place in Victoria's 2023 Pride Parade
- **Saturday, July 15:** TD Moss St. Paint In, showing off the wonderful works of our New Roads Residents
- **Monday, August 28:** The Best of the Region auctions will be unveiled
- **Saturday, Sept. 2, 6pm:** Hungry Hearts broadcast on CHEK TV

 **ourplace**
 Hope and Belonging



Please support those in need through our annual

Bottle Drive

Throughout the month, drop off your returnables at Bottle Depot Charity Bin locations and 100% of the refund will go to help Our Place

July, 2023

Bottle Depot Drop-off Locations:

4261 Glenford Avenue
 655 Queens Avenue
 3961 Quadra Avenue
 or you can drop them off at
 94 Talcott Avenue in View Royal

Please help spread the word
 Drop off your bottles and cans and create change

www.ourplacesociety.com



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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