

# A story of hope: From addiction to stability at Our Place

*After losing everything, Cory found connection, stability and a second chance at Our Place*

There has been a lot of attention recently on the crises of homelessness, addiction and illness that our fellow Victorians are facing. Throughout the community, there is a shared desire to see people get back on their feet, find housing and recover.

When harsh commentary and tragic images are flooding our inboxes and news feeds, it can be hard to believe there are solutions that work.

An Our Place Society employee exemplifies the enduring presence of hope.

## FROM CRISIS TO COMMUNITY

Cory H works in shipping and receiving at Our Place Society on Pandora. He helps with transporting produce, donations of clothing, equipment and more to the nonprofit's community centre, recovery centre and six housing sites. Just a few years ago, he was battling addiction and living in his car.

## A DIFFICULT CHILDHOOD

Growing up, Cory's life was defined by loss. Through tumultuous custody battles, he was passed between his parents and other caregivers in Ontario and BC. He moved across the country six times and never lived in one place for more than 6 months at a time—losing friends, community and stability with every move. Eventually, he ended up in a shelter with his father and brother. They eventually lost his father to an overdose here in Victoria. When the brothers returned to their mother, she had also lost housing. Once homeless, he wasn't able to graduate and left school by the end of the 11th grade.

He applied to jobs across the city, but with no permanent address and no high school diploma, he was rejected every time.

## ADDICTION AND INCARCERATION

At his most desperate, Cory turned to dealing drugs in an attempt to make money quickly and his



Cory H., now an Our Place employee. PHOTO VIA OUR PLACE SOCIETY.

life soon became increasingly unstable. He recalls the many times he managed to get back on his feet and secure housing, only to watch it all fall apart again.

Dealing, living in his car and driving with only a learner's permit, Cory was arrested and incarcerated. It was during this lowest point that he was offered what felt like the first real opportunity he had received in his life.

Working closely with the justice system, the team at New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community admits individuals who are ready to do the hard work to get back on their feet.

## A TURNING POINT AT NEW ROADS

"I never looked back," says Cory of the day he was selected and entered the program.

Cory flourished at New Roads. Within days, he was stepping up to lead his peers and take on additional responsibilities. In addition to regular recovery meetings, he took part in individual counselling, workplace training, equine therapy, physical therapy, raising chickens and more.

"Suddenly, I had all these opportunities and I took them all," he recalls.

The program at New Roads runs from 9 months to 2 years and Cory chose to stay longer to accept yet another opportunity – second stage housing

offered by Our Place to graduates of New Roads. Jaymac Place, a sober house with transitional support from the New Roads team, was the perfect springboard for Cory as he re-entered the workforce.

## GIVING BACK

Like so many graduates, Cory was attracted to working closely with others battling addiction and homelessness like he had.

Today, Cory is a favourite around Our Place as he brings deliveries of clothing donations or unpacks fresh produce and food supplies to the kitchen at the Community Centre. He works alongside many other New Roads graduates and others who have had their own journeys from crisis back to stability.

He's been consistently checking off personal goals like getting his driver's license and owning his own car again.

He goes back to New Roads every week to participate in recovery meetings, especially enjoying telling all the current residents about his success.

"It means a lot to them to hear the things I've achieved, because then they know they can too," he says.



*For over 50 years, Our Place has met people where they are—and helped them move forward. With compassion, hope, and structure, they walk alongside people to build pathways out of poverty, hunger, and addiction.*