

An Easter meal can change lives: How Barb rebuilt her life and found purpose

Help Our Place Society make this Easter brighter for those facing homelessness and addiction through the simple gift of a special meal.



From addiction to a decade of service, Barb Hudlin's recovery was built on community. PHOTO VIA OUR PLACE SOCIETY

For many in our community, Easter isn't about chocolates or egg hunts. It's a hot turkey dinner they can rely on and the sense of belonging they desperately need.

For over a decade, Barb Hudlin has been a dedicated member of the volunteer team serving alongside Gordy Dodd at Our Place Society's holiday meals. She has seen firsthand how hundreds come in from the cold on special holidays like Easter.

But before finding this community, Barb faced addiction herself.

JOURNEY THROUGH LOSS AND ADDICTION

Addiction took hold late in Barb's life, after her children had grown and she was living

alone post-divorce. She almost remarried and spent four happy years with a man who tragically passed away from cancer.

Grief left her vulnerable and a friend introduced her to harder drugs.

"It was pretty simple," says Barb. "Somebody was caring about me."

To most people, her struggles were invisible. Though she remained housed, she was living with others also struggling with addiction while managing to hide her own at work. But from her children, with whom she had become increasingly disconnected, there was no hiding the truth.

Fifteen years ago, her son laid down an ultimatum: She would have to choose between her addiction and her

grandchildren. Within 24 hours, Barb made her decision. Within three weeks, she had moved into her own place and begun an addiction recovery program. She changed her phone number and never looked back.

FROM STRUGGLE TO BELONGING

Recovery isn't as simple as accepting help. Barb knew she needed a supportive community to maintain her health and sobriety. By volunteering her time to help people experiencing addiction and homelessness, she not only gave back but also built the connections that kept her on track.

"It's not easy. You need to find a community to recover," says Barb. She knows this better than most. Barb didn't just rebuild her life; she found

purpose and belonging. It's why she believes that Our Place's holiday meals are about far more than food. "It's not just putting food in their belly. There's so much more than that. There's connection, community and finding out where they can go to get help. All of that falls into place," says Barb. "For me, it fills my heart. They are my family."

DAILY MEALS AT OUR PLACE

Every day, Our Place serves 1,400 nourishing meals to people in need, supporting those facing homelessness and food insecurity and giving them a sense of belonging. On special days like Christmas, Thanksgiving and Easter, the dining room becomes a true family table, where a single meal

can be the start of something much bigger.

This Thursday April 2, Our Place will serve hundreds of Easter meals, with each plate offering a lifeline of warmth and connection. For someone facing homelessness or addiction, it's not just dinner. It's the kind of kindness that keeps people going.

You can give someone that kindness today. A single donation buys a plate of turkey with all the fixings and helps someone in our community feel seen, supported and welcomed.

Help make sure no one spends Easter alone. To learn more about Our Place programs or to make a donation, visit **www.ourplacesociety.com/donate**



Our Place Society continues to serve as a vital support system for individuals in Greater Victoria experiencing poverty, homelessness and isolation. Through programs that provide meals, housing, recovery and ongoing care, Our Place helps people move from surviving to thriving.



Community is at the root of Barb Hudlin's recovery. PHOTO VIA OUR PLACE SOCIETY