



# Building Hope through Education

By Grant McKenzie

Imagine having worked for 30 years and never admitting that you couldn't understand most of what you were asked to read. Or being a grandmother, struggling to keep your grandchildren from falling through the same cracks you did, but wanting a better life for them.

Now imagine how you would feel if someone said "You're not a dummy. I believe in you!" And those words were the **opposite** of what you had been hearing your whole life.

At Our Place, we believe in providing hope. For some, hope is as simple as "Hello" and an invitation to share a meal, as it shows the person they are not invisible. For others, it's helping them up when they've fallen on tough times, and offering them an opportunity to go to detox. Some men will qualify to then enter the New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community located in View Royal.

And for others, it's education.

So many of the people who walk through our doors have never had anyone believe in them before, so even when we offer them the chance to upgrade their education, it can be daunting.

And that's where trust – the trust built

by our team of outreach workers over weeks, months, even years – comes in. And the best part is, we truly do believe in the people we help.

Over the years, we have had a wonderful relationship with Camosun College. The instructors shared our belief in the value of education. They brought expertise and wonderful gifts of compassion, patience, and a way of teaching that isn't intimidating. Classes included Basic English, Math and Computer classes, plus a Workskills for Non-Profits academic training program.

Also, for those interested in seeking work, we offer pre-employment skills classes in our employment program. One program is specifically designed for women who want to re-enter the workforce. With the help of our job coaches over the past year, 40 individuals have found work with local employers.

We also provide a Work as Therapy program at New Roads. With the assistance of local professionals, residents can learn job skills such

as carpentry, cleaning, cooking and gardening in our commercial greenhouse. Thanks to donors, this program continues to grow.

Curiosity is a keystone in life. It is the driving force behind wanting to learn more about the world around us. Our Place strives to remove as many obstacles as we can on this life-long journey – a journey that can start by coming into Our Place for a meal and having someone say, "Hello."



THE 2020  
CHARITY  100

Our Place Society was recognized by MacLean's magazine as one of the top 100 charities in Canada for 2020.

Look for 55plus feature inside

THE 2020  
CHARITY  
100

# Give the Gift of Meals PLUS this Thanksgiving.

Dear Reader,

If you have a loving family, a safe home, and food to share, you have lots to celebrate this Thanksgiving. But that's not the case for those who are homeless, hungry and alone. With nights growing longer and colder, this time of year makes many feel all the more depressed.

One of my family's traditions at Thanksgiving is sharing what we're grateful for. This October, the caring and compassionate donors to Our Place will be on my list. **Join us? A gift of \$3.11 can provide a hot meal PLUS, for someone this Thanksgiving.**

**At Our Place, there's an added benefit with every meal served.** It can lead to a helpful conversation with an outreach worker, access to clean clothes, a hot shower, volunteer nursing and foot care, involvement in our "Hand Up" program for jobs on site, and so much more.

As a former teacher, I strongly believe education can be a powerful pathway out of poverty – as it was for Amy (we've changed her name for privacy reasons). This young woman was living in a downtown shelter and coming to Our Place for meals. Following a lengthy recovery from a car accident, Amy had been struggling to find a job.

Her confidence and self-esteem had taken a beating, but she still wanted more than anything to find a



AL



AMY

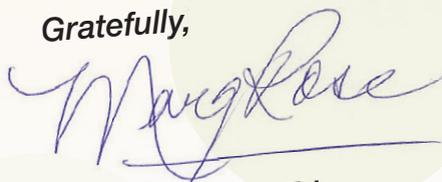
job. Sharing a meal, one of our outreach workers heard her story, and introduced her to a program we offer that helps people get back into work.

Amy enrolled in a series of employment preparation workshops last fall. With help from our job coaches, she grew more confident, created a resume and was hired by one of the 20 caring employers who are partners in this program. Today, Amy is one of 45 graduates who are now gainfully employed. Dozens more are being supported in the virtual job club on Zoom. New small group classes start this fall.

Please help us offer meals PLUS, and a hand up for people like Amy and Al. Your gift of \$3.11 or more will provide hot meals PLUS comfort, compassion, health-giving services, and education for those struggling to feel grateful right now.

From our family to yours, we wish you a calm and restful Thanksgiving.

Gratefully,



Marg Rose, M. Ed.  
Director of Philanthropy

**PS:** You can donate online at [www.ourplacesociety.com](http://www.ourplacesociety.com), or call us at 250-940-5060, or mail in a cheque. Every gift will receive an official tax receipt and our heartfelt appreciation!

# A Legacy of Love for Denise

**D**enise Pearce, born February 18, 1941 in Toronto, died calmly and painlessly of cancer in her sleep at the Saanich Peninsula Hospice on November 9, 2011. But her story will live on for years to come – thanks to her husband, Chris (aka Niel) Pearce.



Described as a strong, honest, highly intelligent woman – with an open heart, active mind, endless energy and a wonderful sense of humour – Denise's career reflected her kindness and generosity to Victoria's most vulnerable people.

During their 46 years together, their love never faltered (although Chris admits his deep devotion to salmon fishing was a close rival). And so, to honour her memory, celebrate their life together and continue their lifelong commitment to help others, Chris has left a gift in his will to Our Place Society.

Chris, born in 1937 in Colombo, Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), joined the British Army in 1955 and came to Canada as an exchange officer in 1963 to join the Queen's Own Rifles of Canada at the Currie Barracks in Calgary.

He first met Denise in 1964 on a blind date, arranged by a fellow officer, (he was 27 and Denise, 23). "She swept into the room wearing black stockings and a miniskirt (all the rage then) and I couldn't help noticing how beautiful she was. After that date, I knew I wanted to spend the rest of my life with her."

Married in Toronto in 1965, one year later – in Hong Kong where Chris was stationed – Denise gave birth to Ursula, and 10 months later, Nathaniel.

Chris left the army in 1969, immigrated to Canada, and the family moved to a beautiful waterfront home in Sidney, BC (where Chris still lives). Their youngest child, Jeremy, was born in 1979.

When Denise completed a BA in Psychology at UVic in 1985, she received a letter from President Howard E. Petch stating, "Your high graduating average brings credit to yourself and the university."

She worked at Our Club – a centre providing meals and community for those struggling with mental health issues – and at Supported Independent Living Program (SIL). When Denise retired, the Executive Director of the Capital Mental Health Association, Gail Simpson, sent her a thank-you note saying "You remain unique in my memory of all the staff members I've worked with: so warm, so willing to try anything for each clients' benefit and so capable."

As part of their adventurous life together, Denise and Chris travelled for 18 months in a Volkswagen camper throughout Europe, visiting 24 countries as far north as Norway and as far south as Turkey and Morocco.

"As long-time donors to Our Place, this legacy gift, in honour of Denise, will be the continuation of a life lived to the fullest, a shared love and a deep commitment to making this world a little brighter, healthier and more caring for some of the most vulnerable people in our community," says Our Place CEO Julian Daly.

 **a legacy of love**

Provide hope and belonging for the future

For more information on establishing your legacy at Our Place, please contact Norma Cameron at 250 940 5066 or by email: [normac@ourplacesociety.com](mailto:normac@ourplacesociety.com) or check out our Estate Planning & Legacy Giving page on our website at [www.ourplacesociety.com](http://www.ourplacesociety.com)

# Serving Your Community

If your group, family or organization would like to sponsor a meal, or if you have further questions about how you can help,

please contact Steven Seltzer at [stevens@ourplacesociety.com](mailto:stevens@ourplacesociety.com) or 250-940-5064.

**\*Note** - we will work with you and your volunteers to ensure all health, safety and social distancing measures are in place.

## A Fresh Start

919 Pandora Ave. Victoria, BC V8V 3P4  
Phone: 250-940-5060  
[www.ourplacesociety.com](http://www.ourplacesociety.com)



## Meal Sponsorship Opportunities

• MENU •

### WORKING TOGETHER

Our Place is inviting you back in to sponsor a meal, serve our community and strengthen your organization. We could tell you how grateful our hungry guests will be - but why not experience that gratitude first-hand for yourself!

### BREAKFAST STARTING AT \$500

We all know how a healthy start can influence our own sense of well-being. Imagine how much more important a morning meal is for someone waking up scared, hurting and with an empty stomach.

### LUNCH STARTING AT \$600

With all meals, Our Place will acknowledge your organization for its generous partnership. Join the circle of local businesses, schools, churches and community groups committed to making a difference at Our Place today!

### DINNER STARTING AT \$750

Promote good values while building your staff, student or church community by helping the region's hungry and hurting.

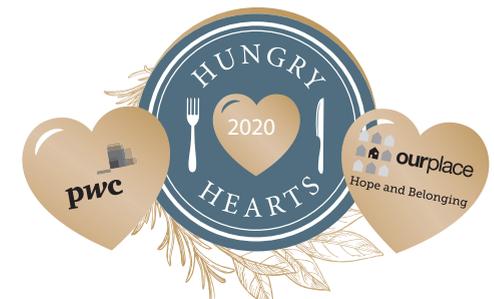
### YOU CAN CHANGE A LIFE TODAY

At Our Place we serve hundreds of meals per day. So please consider adding a financial donation to the cost of the meals to help us provide continued support and nourishment for the most vulnerable citizens of Greater Victoria.

[www.ourplacesociety.com](http://www.ourplacesociety.com)



**HUGE THANKS TO A CHEK TV TEAM FOR SERVING BREAKFAST AT OUR PLACE ON SEPT. 3, 2020!**



Thank you to everyone who helped make our **Virtual Hungry Hearts Gala Fundraiser** an unforgettable experience

Our Event Committee:

Charlotte Salomon QC - Event Chair  
Ian Batey, Greg and Simone Conner, Lee King,  
Christine Lewis, Meghan MacGregor  
Aline Mortimer, Victoria Salter,  
Steven Seltzer,  
Alison Wedekind,  
Christine Yam

Our Event Sponsors:



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