



Check out our flyer inside to see our Amazing Deals for December!
Our 12 Days of Christmas giveaway is back! Visit redbarnmarket.ca for full contest details.

TIMES COLONIST



Wednesday, December 18, 2019

Victoria, British Columbia

High 7. Low 5. Details, B6

CAPITAL



Educator arrested at Saanichton daycare

PAGE A3

BUSINESS



Hackers gain access to LifeLabs data

PAGE D1

LIFE



Turn Dungeness crab into a tasty bisque

ERIC AKIS, PAGE C1

SPORTS



Royals battle the Chiefs in Victoria

PAGE B1



Volunteer Sylvia Walsh serves up meals at the Our Place annual Christmas lunch on Tuesday. More than 800 turkey dinners were expected to be served at Our Place at 919 Pandora Ave. DARREN STONE, TIMES COLONIST

Christmas Fund donors help fund 1,100 meals a day at Our Place

GRANT MCKENZIE

Grant McKenzie is director of communications for Our Place

It's all about the smiles.

It sounds simple, but the people we serve at Our Place don't come by their smiles as easily as those of us who have reliable shelter, food, warmth and love in our lives.

So when I see a smile or listen to a joke or simply lend an ear to one of our family members in need of a vent, I know it matters.

The stories are heartbreaking, the trauma of their lives all too real. So all any of us can do is offer a place of sanctuary and, if we're lucky, the blossom of hope.

And that's where the Times Colonist Christmas Fund comes in. Like all of our corporate partners, the Times Colonist saw the incredible work that Our Place was doing and added us to their list of charitable organizations that would benefit each Christmas. We have been on the list for four years now, and we couldn't be more grateful.

This year, money raised through the Christmas Fund went directly to food. At Our Place, we serve around 1,100 meals and 1,200 snacks (coffee, tea, baked goods) every day. When someone first enters the doors of Our Place, the snack bar is usually the first stop. It's the volunteers serving there who make that vital first impression. They are open, friendly



Please donate to the Times Colonist Christmas Fund. The fund assists individuals and families in need during the Christmas season. Here are ways to donate:

- Go to timescolonist.com/donate. That takes you to the Canada Helps website, which is open 24 hours a day and provides an immediate tax receipt.
- Mail a cheque, payable to the Times Colonist Christmas Fund Society, to the Times Colonist Christmas Fund, 2621 Douglas St., Victoria, B.C. V8T 4M2.
- Use your credit card by phoning 250-995-4438 between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday to Friday. Outside those hours, leave a message, we'll call back.

and ready to serve.

From there, people quickly discover that our hygiene area offers hot showers (cleaned after every use by more volunteers as our way of showing dignity and respect), haircuts, clothing and so much more. With the necessities taken care of, our outreach workers can then assist with the larger difficulties: shelter, housing, medical needs, accessing welfare and much more.

There is care that goes into everything we do. We want people to know that the services we offer are down to the generosity of donors, volunteers and corporate supporters. We don't judge the people who need our services — we simply want to help them get through their day and hopefully find new footing.

We live in an era where society at large seems to value profit over people, and thus it's up to us, those not-for-profits, individuals and corporate supporters who have placed the burden of community responsibility on their own shoulders, to provide for the weak, the poor, the abused and the suffering.

Which is why we need your help year-round.

As I write this, there are tear stains on the shoulder of my jacket from a woman who wanted me to know how grateful she was for Our Place. She has just finished a hot lunch, is seeking a shelter bed for the night and is afraid for the future. Her wrist is bandaged from a violent incident, she sways slightly from a head injury in her past and she faces new difficulties every day. And yet she is thankful.

That is the power of what donating to a good cause can do.

After the woman finishes telling me her story, she wipes her eyes and offers me a kindly smile. She feels safe enough to do so because Our Place is her sanctuary.

That smile means everything.

Mother of murdered girls feels 'deep void'

Sarah Cotton and others give victim-impact statements at Andrew Berry's sentencing

LOUISE DICKSON
Times Colonist

All Sarah Cotton ever wanted to be was a mother.

And she was "so honoured" to be the mother of six-year-old Chloe and four-year-old Aubrey Berry, Cotton said Tuesday as she stood in B.C. Supreme Court and read aloud her victim-impact statement at the sentencing hearing for her former partner, Andrew Berry.

"Our house hummed with their energy, giggles, fast little footsteps and sometimes tears. There was so much life and joy in our house, and now it has all gone silent," said Cotton, her partner Scott Elliott by her side.

Two years after her girls' deaths, Cotton is no longer a mother who takes her children to school every day, makes them meals, cares for them and ensures they are safe and having the best life possible. "I now feel a deep void and an emptiness that will never go away," she said.

In September, after a six-month trial, Berry was convicted of the second-degree murders of his daughters at his Beach Drive apartment on Christmas Day 2017. The little girls had been stabbed to death in their beds.

Justice Miriam Gropper will consider the victim-impact statements in deciding on an appropriate sentence for Berry.

While Berry is automatically sentenced to life in prison, the judge must decide how long Berry must be incarcerated before being eligible for parole. Parole eligibility for second-degree murder is 10 to 25 years.

Crown prosecutor Patrick Weir is asking that Berry serve 21 to 24 years in prison before being eligible for parole. Defence lawyer Kevin McCullough asked for a period of 15 to 20 years, noting that his client maintains his innocence.

"He has deep sympathy for the victims, but is not the killer."

A scruffy, unshaven Berry sat in the prisoner's dock taking notes, his head down. He appeared detached from the proceedings, not looking at the people reading their statements, even when they addressed him directly.

Cotton said she feels guilt that she didn't do more to save Chloe and Aubrey.

"To imagine that my children were not fed or cared for in the days leading up to their deaths is absolutely heartbreaking. I never imagined Andrew wouldn't care for them. They were helpless and defenceless, and I go over the brutality of their deaths over and over again in my mind.

"To try to understand how the father of my children is capable of doing such a horrific and unimaginable act to his own daughters is inconceivable, as all they did was love him."

Cotton's statement was the first of 17 victim-impact statements read into the court record. Family and friends struggled through tears to describe how the murders of Chloe and Aubrey have affected them. People cried openly as they listened to the statements.

> See BERRY, page A2

> To read Sarah Cotton's full victim-impact statement, go to page A10.

WEDNESDAY SECTIONS
A NEWS, CAPITAL, EDITORIAL
B SPORTS
C LIFE, HOMES, ARTS
D BUSINESS, CLASSIFIEDS

TO SUBSCRIBE, CALL 250-382-2255

ARTS C6
BRIDGE C2
BUSINESS D1

TIMESCOLONIST.COM

CAPITAL A3
CLASSIFIEDS D6
COMICS B5

CROSSWORDS C2
HOMES C4
HOROSCOPE D7

LIFE C1
OBITUARIES D6
SPORTS B1

162ND YEAR | NO. 7 \$1.67 PLUS TAX

SUDOKU C2
TELEVISION C7
WEATHER B6



\$200,000 EARLY BIRD DEADLINE FRIDAY

WIN \$90,000 Travel Gift Card PLUS \$30,000 cash OR 2020 Tesla Model S Long Range OR Choose \$100,000 Cash
DEADLINE MIDNIGHT, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20TH

MillionaireLottery.com

TOLL FREE 1-888-445-5825

IN PERSON VGH+ LONDON DRUGS UBC hospital foundation
TICKETS 2 for \$100 | 5 for \$175 | 10 for \$250 | 25 for \$500

Winner will choose one prize option; other prize options will not be awarded.

Chances are 1 in 299,000 (total tickets for sale) to win a grand prize.

BC Gaming Event Licence #120491

Problem Gambling Help Line 1-888-795-6111
www.bcresponsiblegambling.ca

Know your limit, play within it.

19+ to play!