



On the front lines - Jordan Cooper

Ever since he was a teenager, Jordan Cooper has been working on the front lines of poverty, homelessness, addiction and the unpredictability of severe mental illness.

With no other place to go, the people who huddle on the sidewalks and boulevards in front of Our Place on Pandora can be easy to dismiss as beyond our caring, beyond our compassion. Too often, the public places labels: addict, drunk, thief, lazy, dangerous.

But to Jordan, they're family. He has worked, laughed, cried, fed, even bathed many of them for over a decade. He has also attended far too many memorial services because, sadly, that is life on the street: volatile, dangerous, stressful and ultimately, short.

Starting out by helping his dad at the Open Door, Jordan quickly discovered his calling. His intrinsic empathy and natural leadership quickly saw him work his way up the ranks to Outreach Manager at Our Place. And in this time of pandemic, leadership is badly needed as this health crisis is like nothing we've ever seen before.

"Normally at times of crisis, we rally together," says Jordan. "But we have to step carefully now. We need to keep both the street family and our staff safe, which means following all new protocols while still being a resource that people can rely upon."

To that end, Jordan and his staff have

been delivering over 1,000 meals per day from the Our Place kitchen to the street family outside. The team is also doing constant check-ins on people's health, both physically and mentally. A boon has been the hiring of Paramedic/Outreach workers who are able to treat the families immediate needs (wound care, etc.) while assessing if they have COVID-19 symptoms and/or need to visit the hospital.

Jordan's smile widened over the weekend when Our Place, with the assistance of City of Victoria staff, was able to reopen its showers.

"Over 100 people had a long, hot shower for the first time in weeks," he says. "And we were as relieved as them because this is what we do, we provide hope, safety, nourishment and hygiene. It's in our DNA."

Slàinte mhòr agad! – Grant McKenzie

P.S. The well-being of vulnerable people who come to Our Place every day for essential services is our deepest concern. Hundreds are at risk of being hardest hit by illnesses. Your support to bolster our daily food, shelter and emergency supplies in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic is needed now more than ever. Online donations can be made at: www.ourplacesociety.com Donate or call the donor hotline at: 250-940-5060. Thank you for your compassion and concern.

OUR DOORS MAY BE CLOSED BUT OUR **HEARTS** ARE **OPEN**

We're grateful to all the frontline workers who are taking care of our communities.

THANK YOU.



Frontline outreach workers at Our Place thank the following for supporting people in need.

"A different world cannot be built by indifferent people." – Peter Marshall

- Rapid Relief Fund Contributors
- Times Colonist
- Victoria Foundation
- City of Victoria
- BC Housing
- Island Health
- Matching Challenge Seed Donors
- United Church of Canada Foundation
- The Our Place Caring Community of Individual Donors

Take-out Meal Sponsors – April 2020

May Gold Village Restaurant – 10 week sponsor
\$1000 Full Day Sponsors: Gale Ashelm, Erb Technical Contracting Ltd., Tower Fence Products, Pddy Stewart, Kirsty Thomson/Raymond James, Ron Sur, Canadian Tire, Upanup, Dodd's Furniture, Urban Systems, Cart of Hearts, Margorie Seager, Camosun College Trades Faculty, Leon Judah Blackmore Foundation, Our Place Society Board of Directors, Knappett Project Inc., Christ Church Cathedral, Concert Properties, Innovative Communities Org. Fdn., Oaklands Bible Chaple.

\$600 Hot Meal Sponsors: Kellen Koo, Pacific Concrete Cutters, Veronica Osborn, Meeta Kurana, Aline Mortimer, Rob Tournour Masonry Ltd., Shell Victoria Stations, Silver Fern Stainless Ltd., Janet Gaunt, Sara Neely, Peter and Oana Grant.



Hope and Belonging

www.ourplacesociety.com
T: 250-940-5060