

# 2008 Annual Report

## OUR MISSION

Our Place Society (OPS) works in compassionate Christian love with those who are homeless and others in need to enrich and improve the lives of all.

OPS, the Alliance of the Open Door Inner City Ministry and the Upper Room Society, continues its three core activities – drop-in centre, transitional housing and meal service.

## BOARD

There were two resignations from the Board during 2007 (Larry Scyner and Karen Preston) and the addition of two new members – Linda Rae Barry and Donald Storch. The continuing Board members are Dennis Anholt, Ruth Elvey, Don Fletcher (Vice Chair), Paul Jenkins, Bruce Jordan (Secretary), Elmarie Roberts (Recording Secretary), John Ronald (Chair), Michael Shepherd, Gordon Sloan, and Dawn Williamson. Rev. Allen Tysick, Executive Director, and Rev. David Stewart, Director of Operations, also attend board meetings.

Last year's report commented that 'facilitating the transition from two separate locations into the purpose-built new facility is a major and complex task' which will 'dominate priorities during 2007'. This was most certainly the case. 2007 was a year of very hard work for everyone involved with OPS. The hard work is by no means over but we can look back on 2007 as a year of substantial achievement. The new building is completed. Also, major progress was made in establishing Our Place as a distinct entity in the eyes of the public, our donors and supporters, our employees and the clients we serve.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

The construction of the new building at 919 Pandora Avenue was completed and OPS took possession on November 25th. Our own assessment and that of the inner city family and visitors is that the building is excellent and will serve the community well.

The Upper Room (UR) building was vacated on December 12th. The same day, the first residents moved into the new building and meal service commenced there.

Deconstruction of the UR building has begun and is expected to be completed by mid-March.

During this period, the drop-in centre will continue at 713 Johnson St. We anticipate completion of the courtyard on the site of the UR space by the end of March 2008. Transfer of the drop-in centre to 919 Pandora will follow.

An Opening Ceremony will be held in either late March or early April.

There have been many personnel changes and additions in order properly to staff the new building including the hiring of Karen Preston as Director of Finance and Administration.

As of November 1st, all employees formerly with the Open Door or the Upper Room became employees of OPS. This essentially completed the integration of the two organizations into one.

There have been a multitude of projects undertaken and completed in order to create one new organization, Our Place, out of the two founding organizations and also to complete the construction project. These include the development of position descriptions and a revised organization chart, new Human Resources Policies and Procedures, the creation of a Transition Working Group to assist with the new building project, finalization of the loan/mortgage agreement with BC Housing, and completion of an agreement with Vancouver Island Health Authority for operating funds.

An operating agreement between OPS and the United Church of Canada has been developed and will be signed early in 2008.

## HIGHLIGHTS

While all this has been going on, OPS has continued its 'normal' activities. The drop-in centre has continued to operate, including participation in the Cold Weather Protocol in effect in downtown Victoria during the winter. Our meal facility continues to serve in excess of 100,000 meals a year, while our transitional housing provided space for 45 different people during 2007. Special First Nations Days were held at the drop-in centre in the fall, and our annual Christmas Party was held at First+Metropolitan United Church in December. Over 1,000 ANGEL GIFTS were distributed to the needy of Victoria before Christmas. Our year ended serving our traditional New Year's Eve turkey dinner to 531 grateful diners.

As always, we are extremely grateful for the diligent work of our employees and our many volunteers. We appreciate the generosity of all our donors and supporters who provide the resources to make it all happen. And lastly we acknowledge with great thanks the encouragement and counsel of the Victoria Presbytery of the United Church of Canada.

Respectfully submitted,  
John Ronald  
Chairperson, Our Place Society