

a Milestone Project



**EDMONTON
JOHN HOWARD
SOCIETY**

Safety and Harmony in our Community

This historical account is dedicated to:

Our founders ... the early pioneers of Edmonton John Howard Society who, with foresight, vision and dedication laid the foundation for who we are today;

Our volunteers and staff (past, present and future) ... who bring their best selves to work and keep our vision alive through their service;

Those affected by crime ... who, with courage and determination, make life transforming changes that create brighter futures for themselves and their families;

And

Our community ... whose participation in crime prevention solutions leads us to our vision of safety and harmony in our community.



1726 - 1790 Lifespan of John Howard

- 1931** John Howard Society opens an office in Vancouver headed by Reverend **John Dinnage Hobden**
- 1938** Release of the **Archambault Commission Report**
- 1946** Citizens Service Association in Toronto adopts the name **John Howard Society of Ontario**
- 1947** Meeting of 33 prominent community leaders from Edmonton and across Alberta to hear about the need for a John Howard Society in Alberta
- 1948** Organizational meeting of the **John Howard Society of Alberta** (and the creation of 3 Districts- Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge)
- Free office space is provided in **209 Alberta Jasper Building**
 - Mr. **A.B King** is hired as first Edmonton Office Liaison Officer for Fort Saskatchewan Penitentiary
 - Walter Blackburn** arrives as first Executive Secretary of JHSA
- 1949** Re-organization of the Edmonton District Council saw **Group Captain F.S. Carpenter** (Salvation Army) as its first Chairman
- 1950** **Walter Lemmon** assumes role of Executive Secretary of the JHSA and the office is relocated to Calgary
- Edmonton Office located at **9828 - 109th St.** (house)
 - George Henwood** is elected as the third Chairman of the Edmonton District Council
 - Clara Mintz** is employed to look after Edmonton Office until arrival of Eakins
 - J.R.Eakins** comes from the Ontario John Howard Society to take charge of the Edmonton office as Associate Secretary
- 1951** **D.G. McCullagh** is employed as Associate Secretary in Edmonton
- 1953** Edmonton Office located at **9818 - 108th St.** (house)

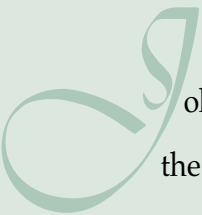
Edmonton John Howard Society

- 1954** **John Lamb** is the Associate Secretary in Edmonton and **Ken Watson** is the new Caseworker in Edmonton.
- 1956** **Ken Watson** is listed as the Associate Secretary in Edmonton but resigned during the year. He is replaced by **Murray Sutherland**. **Frank Breakwell** is listed a caseworker in Edmonton.
- 1958** **R.M. Deidal**, (M.S.W.) becomes Associate Secretary and **Fred Oswin** join the Edmonton staff as a caseworker.
- 1959** **National Parole Board** established by the **Parole Act**
- **Clara Mintz** (Edmonton) becomes the first woman President of the JHSA
 - **Ken Crockett** (also President of the Edmonton Bar Association) is Edmonton District Chair
 - Miss **Marjorie Larson** is hired in Edmonton as first female caseworker to handle female inmates at the Women's Jail in Fort Saskatchewan.
 - Edmonton office moves to a new location - **Rawleigh Building** (#304 - 10740 Jasper Ave)
- 1962** Edmonton District organizes its **First Institute of Corrections** conference
- 1967** Edmonton Office moves to # **201, 10526 Jasper Ave** (now CKUA Building)
- **John Ramoutar** becomes Associate Secretary of Edmonton District
- 1970** **Howard House** (now **Manor**) is opened in Edmonton and managed by Cliff Pope
- 1974** City of Edmonton hosts the Annual General Meetings for John Howard Society of Canada, John Howard Society of Alberta and the Edmonton District in May at the Chateau Lacombe
- All District Directors of Alberta JHS Districts resigned

Timeline

- 1975** Edmonton Office moves up one floor to #301, 10526 Jasper Ave.
- 1976** JHSA Board changes title from Executive Secretary to District Director
- **Janet Storch** writes "An Organizational Analysis of the John Howard Society" (Alberta) which reveals Edmonton District's weaknesses
- 1979** **William Lowen** is recruited as District Secretary for Edmonton District by Chairman **Bradley Willis**
- **Gordon Sand** is hired by the Edmonton John Howard District
 - **Public Education** is created as a department within Edmonton District
- 1982** Opening of **Independence Apartments**
- 1984** Youth Program (forerunner to the CJE Program) was piloted successfully in Edmonton schools
- **Edmonton John Howard Society** is created through the Alberta Society Act
- 1986** **Straight Goods Industries** project is established
- Opening of **101st Street Apartments**
- 1990** **Maureen Collins** becomes the Executive Director of the EJHS and is now the longest serving Executive leader since 1949
- 1996** Initiation of **Edmonton Victim/Offender Mediation Project** in collaboration with Elizabeth Fry Society and Community Justice Ministries
- 1998** Opening of **Satellite House**
- Assumed administrative responsibility for **Family Violence Prevention Centre**
- 2001** **Fifty Year Business Plan** developed for Edmonton John Howard Society
- 2004** Edmonton Office moves to its own building at **10010 - 105th Street**
- 2008** Opening of **The Loft**
- 2009** 60th Anniversary Celebrations

Who was John Howard?

A decorative flourish in a light green color, consisting of a large, stylized letter 'J' that loops around and under itself, positioned to the left of the first paragraph.

John Howard Society takes its name and spirit from the 18th century humanitarian, John Howard (1726-1790), whose name has become a symbol of humane consideration for incarcerated individuals.

John Howard was a voluntary and unofficial enquirer into the subject of 18th century prisons and prisoners. In 1773, John Howard began his work as a prison reformer as the Sheriff of Bedford. For the next twenty years, Howard worked to improve the terrible conditions of prisons. His report, "On the State of Prisons in England and Wales," along with other writings, was instrumental in establishing regulations to reform prison systems.

John Howard was not afraid to voice his concerns or critique prison conditions. On one of his seven trips to Europe, he told the Emperor of Vienna that he would rather be hung than stay in the Emperor's dungeons. As a private, involved citizen, John Howard set an example that has become a cornerstone of the John Howard Societies: there cannot be effective crime prevention solutions without community participation.



Edmonton John Howard Society
60 Years of Service
1949 - 2009

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed, citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.
Margaret Mead

Introduction

Edmonton John Howard Society is a story about people helping people, and seeing the best in people - even under the most difficult circumstances - treating them with compassion, acceptance and inclusion. This concern for people, regardless of their circumstances, has been the Society's hallmark since its inception.

In 2009, Edmonton John Howard Society celebrated 60 years of service to the Edmonton community. This important milestone provided an opportunity to reflect on our past and to remember the crucial steps and decisions that were made by volunteers, staff and clients over the years that brought the organization to where it is today.

The purpose of this written account is to acknowledge and recount the voices and actions of the people who created, guided and grew the organization - from a handful of dedicated volunteers and a \$7,000 budget in 1949 to the \$6.5 million dollar organization it is today. Together, they have built an impressive heritage of service to the Edmonton community, and we are mindful of the legacy and dream they have bequeathed to us.

We are proud of our heritage and we invite you to share it with us as we move toward our next 60 years.

Responding to a Need

Until less than a century ago, Canadian society perceived little social responsibility for the well being of offenders - whether incarcerated or free. Prison conditions were generally primitive and often dangerous. Authorities showed little concern for protecting or honouring offender rights and the public was largely indifferent to the plight of individuals who had, for all intents and purposes, forfeited their rights once they were convicted of a crime.


THE WEEKLY WELCOME.



RESULT OF JOHN HOWARD'S INFLUENCE.

No. 79. August 4, 1877.

Geo. F. Fox.



In 1932, prison violence and riots broke out in Kingston and soon spread to 15 other prisons across the country. The Canadian government responded to the riots by appointing Mr. Justice **Joseph Archambault** to lead a Royal Commission on the state of Canadian penitentiaries. The Archambault Report, released in 1938, forced the government - and Canadian society - to acknowledge the many ills affecting the prison system and offered many recommendations for improvement. However, implementation of the Archambault recommendations was interrupted by World War II. As a result, nothing was initiated until the passage of the Penitentiary Act in 1947. With the passage of the Act, Canada's first Prison Commissioner, Major General **Ralph B. Gibbs**, was appointed and **Frank Miller** became the first Classification Officer assigned in the penitentiary system.

Despite the prevailing public sentiment towards offenders, there were those individuals early in the 20th century who recognized the need to support and care for offenders once they were released from prison. A number of church organizations and prison welfare associations sprang up (and often withered) in several Canadian cities with the intent of providing the basic necessities to released offenders and their families.

In Vancouver, Reverend **John Dinnage Hobden**, a United Church Minister, was selected to lead a group of clergy who came together to create an organization to help the families of incarcerated men, as well as the men themselves upon release. They named the fledgling organization after the great 18th century penal reformer, John Howard, and in 1931 opened the first office in Vancouver. In 1946, the Citizens Service Association in Toronto changed its name to the John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO), becoming the second John Howard Society in Canada and extending the national reach of the young organization.

The John Howard Society Comes to Alberta

In February of 1947, **J. Alex Edmison**, the Executive Secretary of the JHSO and a prominent penal reform leader, came to Edmonton as part of a cross country speaking tour. His visit prompted a special gathering of concerned Edmontonians on

September 15, 1947, hosted by the Edmonton Council of Social Agencies (ECSA). A number of prominent Edmonton civic leaders participated in the meeting, including **Harry D. Ainlay**, Mayor of Edmonton, Edmonton Police Chief **R. Jennings** and University of Alberta Law School Dean, **W.F. Bowker**, along with many other church and civic notables.

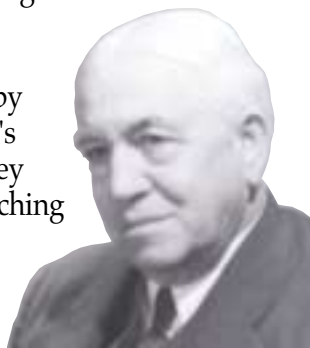
1948

p/t first stenographer hired by Edmonton office - a Mrs. Henderson with extensive experience in a law office - 3 hours every afternoon at the amazing rate of .75/hr

The meeting was addressed by Right Reverend **A.H. Sovereign**, Bishop of Athabasca, who had a long association with the John Howard Society in British Columbia. He spoke on the need of prisoners under the current circumstances and encouraged the formation of prisoner aid societies, such as John Howard, on a national basis and "with a measure of government support." The Edmonton group was sufficiently motivated by the address to strike a steering committee to investigate the potential of forming such an organization in Alberta.

The steering committee, chaired by **George H. Henwood**, K.C. (King's Counsel), Alberta Deputy Attorney General, was tasked with approaching similar social agency councils in Calgary and Lethbridge. The

committee reported back to a special meeting on April 28, 1948, in Edmonton. This pivotal meeting, too, was hosted by the ECSA, under the chairmanship of **E.B. Wilson**, K.C. The steering committee's report was unanimously adopted and the decision made to organize a **John Howard Society of Alberta** (JHSA). A draft constitution was also adopted, after some minor amendments. Nominations for a Board of Directors was presented and accepted, as well a slate of Officers, with George Henwood becoming the first President of the John Howard Society of Alberta.



The report from the steering committee set out an organizational vision for JHSA. It was to be a Province wide association, headquartered in Edmonton, with a Provincial Board of Directors and local District Councils. Ten districts were identified (based on provincial judicial districts at the time): Grande Prairie, Peace River, Edmonton, Vegreville, Wetaskiwin, Red Deer, Calgary, Lethbridge, Macleod and Medicine Hat.

The JHSA was to be largely a volunteer led and driven association. Each District would have a core group of volunteers whose task it would be to look after the immediate needs of released offenders in their community. The report did recognize, however, the importance of employing a "qualified social worker" as an Executive Secretary at the Provincial level. Funding for staff and operations were to be sought from federal, provincial and municipal sources, as well as from "memberships." In July 1948, members of the Board of Directors met with **Premier Manning**, where they outlined the purpose of the JHSA and requested provincial funding.

Also in July 1948, the Society hired two Liaison Officers to interface with the two federal institutions in Alberta - Mr. **A.B. King** (a retired banker) for the Fort Saskatchewan Jail and Mr. **Gibson** for the Lethbridge Jail. It was already recognized that the kind of consistent commitment required for visiting these two institutions were beyond the scope of what most volunteers could deliver.

Walter W. Blackburn arrived from Eastern Canada in August 1948, as the first Executive Secretary. His job was to oversee the two staff, seek out funding and build and support the work of the District Councils. Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge were of primary importance, given their population size and proximity to the institutions from which the prisoners would come.

The first Annual General Meeting of the John Howard Society was held in the Masonic Lodge in Edmonton (corner of 100 Avenue and 103 Street) on March 29, 1949 and John Howard Society of Alberta was officially incorporated as a Society on April 11, 1949.

During the latter part of the 1950s, it became increasingly apparent to the growing number of John Howard Societies across Canada that there was a need for a national stage to further the goals and objectives of the societies. Alberta played a lead role in the creation of a national John Howard Society. In fact, Monsignor **Joseph E. LeFort** from Calgary (who had been both the Calgary and provincial President) became the first national president of John Howard Society of Canada in 1962.



Birth and Growth of the Edmonton John Howard Society

In the Beginning: 1949

The **Edmonton District Council** was somewhat late in forming. There was little motivation to establish an Edmonton District, since the primary movers and leaders of the JHSA were based in Edmonton under Henwood and supported by Blackburn. Many of the Board meetings took place in Edmonton and local issues were discussed and monitored at the provincial level. Dr. **D.E. Smith**, Dean of Arts at the University of Alberta and member of the provincial Board, was a leading critic of the delay in setting up an Edmonton District (which was called for in the Constitution).

MARIE WYLIE AWARD

(John Howard Society of Alberta Awards)

1. The person is an employee of the John Howard Society and is not an Executive Director
2. The person has done sufficient work to receive recognition by the Executive Director of the District.

Wylie Awards - presented to EJHS Staff

1983-Yvette DeGiobbi

1987-Ron Wurtz

1992-Marlene Choma

1997-Robin Murray

2000-Dan Ritter

2008-Jay Schreiner

JUNE LINDGREN AWARD

An award to recognize an outstanding volunteer contribution to the John Howard Society of Alberta.

Lindgren Awards - presented to EJHS Volunteers

1995-John Mould - Board

2003-Dave Bell - Board

2004-Frank Postill - Program Volunteer

2006-Michelle Andrews - Board

An informal meeting was finally called for January 27, 1949 at the Council of Social Agencies in Edmonton to discuss the organization of the Edmonton District Council. It was chaired by Henwood and attended by some 20 people. An Edmonton District Council was deemed necessary to support the Executive Secretary and provincial Board in the areas of employment opportunities, membership, publicity and finance. A nominating committee was struck and it produced a list of 27 candidates for the scheduled meeting of members on February 17. This meeting was attended by about 45 people and again was chaired by Henwood. The Bishop of Edmonton, the Right Reverend **W.L. Barfoot**, addressed the meeting and stressed the need to understand the purpose of the JHSA.



The entire slate of candidates was elected to the District Council (with the addition of two more). From this group, Group Captain **F. S. Carpenter**, from the Salvation Army, was chosen as the first Chairman. The Executive Committee of the Edmonton District Council met the next day to organize the Council. Five committees were established and chairman/ members suggested for each - Publicity, Membership, Finance, Employment and Public Education.

1948

Mileage reimbursement of .10/mile was adopted by the Board for "legitimate business"

The Edmonton District Council appears to have faced a challenge in keeping a President for any length of time. People tended to move away from Edmonton as the provincial economy grew. At a meeting on February 20, 1950, the Council was asked to elect its third President - who, this time, was **George Henwood** - former president of the provincial body. Mr. Henwood's comments at this meeting are telling. He expressed disappointment with the apathy shown by the Council in the past year and its failure to raise more than \$3,500 in its last Fall Membership Drive. District membership was important as it provided both a source of financial support and a source of volunteer labour for the society's work.

The Early Years: 1950-1958

In the early months of 1950, the first Executive Secretary of JHSA, Walter Blackburn, accepted a position with the City of Edmonton and tendered his resignation on May 26, effective August 1. This threw JHSA into some confusion as it became apparent that there were few candidates identified to replace him.

The Board of JHSA now faced a difficult decision. The Associate Secretary for the Calgary District Office, **Walter Lemmon**, who had been hired in March 1949 and who was both a well respected and competent staff person, had expressed interest in the senior position. He was not, however, prepared to move to Edmonton. After much discussion and soul searching, the Board decided in June to hire Lemmon as Executive Secretary and move the Provincial Office to Calgary.

This decision was crucial to the future of the Edmonton District. The local Council was no longer integrally tied to the provincial operation and, thus, was forced to assume a greater leadership role in its own affairs. It also required that there be an Associate Secretary based in Edmonton to look after the local affairs.

By the fall of 1950, Mr. **J.R. Eakin** from Toronto had been hired into the position of Associate Secretary in Edmonton. Earlier that year, Mr. A.B. King resigned as Liaison Officer for the Fort Saskatchewan Jail, having grown disillusioned by the failure of clients to be rehabilitated. His casework was temporarily taken over by Mr. Roberts, a teacher on summer break, but otherwise the Edmonton office remained critically understaffed.

Recruiting and retaining caseworker staff proved very daunting in the early years. Salaries were not competitive and the desire to hire individuals with social work education and experience created real challenges in finding suitable candidates. Even before he resigned as Provincial Executive Secretary, Walter Blackburn had repeatedly stressed the need for more caseworkers for the Edmonton office and that one "man" could not handle the caseloads required.

1954

Personnel
Committee
recommends
the
establishment
of a Pension
Plan for all
Society
employees

In its early years, Edmonton John Howard District experienced serious and continual challenges to its resources - both financial and human. After the Provincial Office and its Executive Secretary moved to Calgary in 1950, the leadership position of Associate Secretary changed hands several times. Eakin left within a year and was replaced by **D.G McCullagh** in the spring of 1951. McCullagh, in turn, left in April 1954 and was replaced by **John Lamb**. Lamb, with a Salvation Army background, had only recently joined the society as a caseworker. He, too, left fairly soon after assuming the role of interim Associate Secretary.


Ken Watson, a graduate of the UBC School of Social Work, who had been hired by JHSA Executive Secretary, Walter Lemmon, to work in the Edmonton Office as a caseworker, replaced Lamb as the Associate Secretary and held the position for 18 months. After his departure, Watson was succeeded by fellow UBC graduate **Murray Sutherland** who also left after a short time. In 1958, the position was assumed by **Robert Deidal**, who was hired by JHSA Executive Secretary, Walter Lemmon, after a recruiting visit to Vancouver had been undertaken in desperation.

Seeking Stability: 1958-1979

Robert Deidal remained in the position of Associate Secretary for nine years, bringing greater stability to the growing organization. When Deidal left to work at the Drumheller Penitentiary in 1967, he was replaced by **John Ramoutar**, who had immigrated to Canada from Trinidad in 1956. Ramoutar

studied social work at both the University of Saskatoon and the University of Manitoba, receiving his MSW in 1965. He reports that he was prompted to leave Manitoba after an unusually heavy snowfall and, thereby, accepted an offer by Craig Reid to become an Associate Secretary in Calgary in 1966. When the position of Secretary came up in Edmonton, Ramoutar moved north and stayed in the position until 1973.





During this time, tensions were growing between the Edmonton District and the Provincial Office in Calgary, exacerbated by the distance between the two cities and the lack of direct contact between the executive staff of the two offices. Matters came to a head in early 1971, when the Edmonton District Council produced a motion of non-confidence in the JHSA Executive Director. This step resulted in several months of soul searching by the staff and volunteers of both the JHSA and its affiliates, who sought to reassess the working relationships between the different levels of the Society and to assign key responsibilities. The Provincial Personnel Committee for 1972/73 reported that:

"...misunderstandings developed between District Councils and the Provincial Body. These misunderstandings filtered down to the employee level with the inevitable result that lines of communication became fouled and the work of the Society suffered. Your Committee recognized these developments and rather than simply deploring them, your Committee agreed that the Executive Director and Executive Secretaries should forthwith attempt to iron out their difficulties. A meeting of those concerned was held in March (1973) and another one will be held in May or early June. It is to be hoped that normal and amicable lines of communication will be resumed but if they are not, your Committee is prepared to make recommendations regarding the continuous employment, or otherwise, of those concerned."

Despite the best efforts of all concerned, conflict took its toll on the organization. By 1974, all Associate Secretaries of the operational Districts had resigned, including John Ramoutar who went on to a very successful career with Alberta Hospital. This ushered in another period of instability for the Edmonton John Howard District, as it went through five District Secretaries (as they were now called) over five years. **K.T. Motherwell, Grant Rathwell, Fred Monk, Rick Desrosiers and Keith Spencer** all served as District Secretaries in quick succession. When Spencer left for a teaching position at the University of Alberta in 1979, Council Chairman, **Bradley Willis**, successfully recruited **William (Bill) Lowen** as the new District Secretary.

As a point of interest, Willis himself had been recruited to the Edmonton John Howard District Council by Provincial Board Director, Father **Bill Irwin** (who had a long and distinguished association with the JHSA). Father Irwin was also linked to the Family Services Association, whose Executive Director was **Jackson Willis** - Bradley's father. Bill Lowen was working for the Family Services Association when he was recruited by the younger Willis. Interesting family connections, especially considering the elder Willis had at one time applied for the position of Executive Director of the JHSA!

The period that started with the appointment of Bill Lowen as District Secretary in 1979 was a significant one for John Howard Societies across Alberta. Within five years, the way in which JHSA was structured and operated had completely changed. In 1984, both the Calgary and Edmonton offices incorporated independently as societies. Other district offices followed suit in the latter half of the 1980s. Local societies and the provincial office remained voluntarily linked by terms of association, with the provincial body playing a coordinating role and local societies taking responsibility for responding to local needs. This final organizational stage completed the vision - in spirit and values - of George Henwood and other founders in the late 1940s.

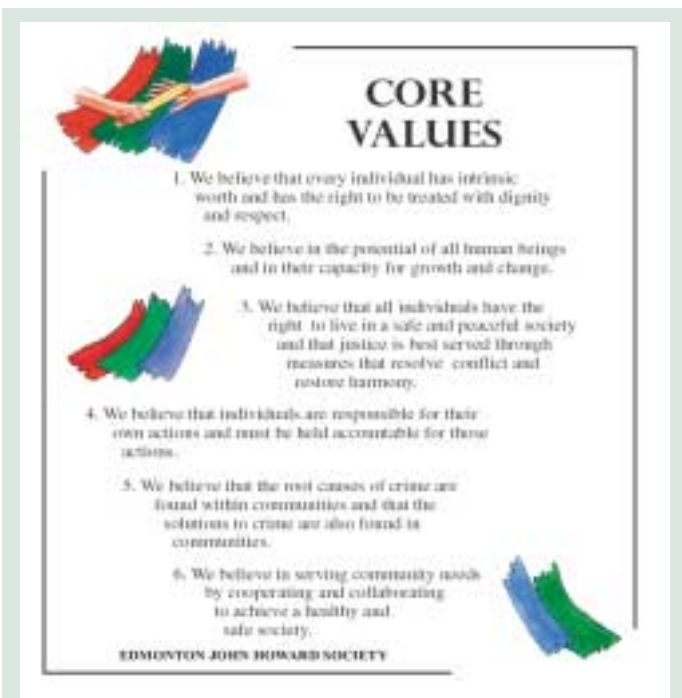
1958

Mrs. Clara Mintz and Father Bill Irwin were elected to the Provincial Board as representatives from Edmonton District

Strategic Growth: 1980-1999

In September 1980, **Maureen Collins** - who was to become EJHS's longest serving Executive Director - was hired as a caseworker. Her responsibilities included prison liaison work at the newly opened Edmonton Remand Centre and Fort Saskatchewan Correctional Centre, as well as parole supervision and intake responsibilities. When **Gord Sand**, Director of Community Services left in 1981 to become the Executive Director of the Calgary John Howard Society, Maureen assumed his responsibilities as Director of Community Services. In 1990, with the departure of Bill Lowen after 10 years of successful leadership, Maureen became the first female Executive Director of EJHS - a position she has held for 20 years...and counting.

In the mid-1980s, EJHS developed its vision and mission statements, and articulated its core values, through a collaborative process that involved Board, staff, program users and community stakeholders. These statements helped to focus the development of EJHS into an organization that increasingly sought the participation and involvement of the greater community in achieving its goals. By the early 1990s, the flurry of activity in EJHS attested strongly to that new vision. The focus was now on employment, literacy and housing - all directed toward providing ex-offenders with all the tools they need to get back into mainstream society.



Social investment in the Edmonton community continued in the 1990s, enhancing the excellent work initiated by Bill Lowen. Through the efforts and involvement of its senior management, EJHS enjoyed a highly respected position on social issues. The Society also invested time and effort on the development of its Board, ensuring its Directors understood and promoted its mission and purpose.

By the middle of the 1990s, EJHS found itself in unchartered - but certainly not unwelcome - territory. After decades of financial limitations and unpredictable funding, EJHS now enjoyed a modest surplus, thanks to effective Board policies and executive management. This happy circumstance introduced new challenges, as the Board worked to develop policies for surplus management.



Maureen Collins, Bill Lowen and John Paetz

Risk management presented another policy challenge to the Board. Concerns about risk management introduced a higher element of fear and increased cautiousness into many charitable and non-profit organizations involved with the vulnerable and marginalized segments of the community. Despite the need for increased due diligence and standardization and monitoring of practices, EJHS never curtailed any of its programs or services. In fact, the Board continued to encourage and enable new initiatives and programs developed by staff in response to the changing needs of the community

The New Millennium: 2000-2009

As the new millennium dawned, EJHS remained a values driven organization, guided by the vision, mission and core values that it developed almost two decades earlier. In 2001, following extensive research by two senior staff, **Dan Ritter** and **Doug Seitsinger**, EJHS developed a 50 year business plan to guide and direct the organization for many years to come. That same year, the Society purchased its own building, as a permanent home for its 100 staff members and 60-plus volunteers. EJHS was firmly rooted in the community and looking toward the future.



Dan Ritter and Doug Seitsinger
Fall Fest prize booth

Finding a Place to Park

Staffing uncertainty for EJHS was matched by impermanence of the District Office. Initially, the Edmonton District Office shared space with JHSA in the Alberta Jasper Building, which was provided free of charge by the provincial government. The address of the Alberta Jasper Building, 9815 Jasper Avenue, is now a parking lot just west of the Shaw Convention Centre.

In 1950, the Society moved to an old house at 9828 - 109 Street (now a parking lot), where it stayed until 1952. From 1952 to 1959, the District Office was located in another old house, one block east, at 9818 - 108 Street (which is now - you guessed it - a parking lot!).

With Deidal, the District Office had moved again, this time to the **Rawleigh Building** at 10740 Jasper Avenue. It remained there until 1967 - the end of Deidal's tenure - demonstrating the growing stability in staffing and operation of the Edmonton District Office. In 1967, EJHS began a long and familiar presence in the Alberta Block Building on Jasper Avenue, a home it shared with CKUA radio (which is still there - and, no, the building did not become a parking lot!).

By 2001, after a history of renting space for its offices and programs, EJHS was finally able to purchase its own building. Located on the corner of 100 Avenue and 105 Street, the four storey building provided ample space for the Society's administration and community based programs - with room to grow. The Society officially moved into the new building in 2004 and was now able to fully control its operation expenses and to receive a modest return on its investment by leasing to other like-minded community agencies.

The Role of Women

Women were no strangers to EJHS. Meeting minutes from the very early days of JHSA indicate that community minded women were involved in the deliberations to establish the Society and played an integral role in the volunteer operations in all districts.



While records are not clear, it seems that a prominent Edmontonian, **Clara Mintz**, may have worked in some capacity with JHSA as early as 1950. Be that as it may, Clara went on to become a member of EJHS Board later that decade and then its President, finally moving on to become President of JHSA in 1960. Clara Mintz stayed on the EJHS Board until 1963.

Although the original mandate of JHSA was to serve male clients, it became clear early on that women needed the services of an organization like the John Howard Society and it is probable that women clients were included in the early years. Services for women became more transparent by 1957 when the EJHS hired Marjorie Larson as its first female caseworker. When Larson resigned in 1961, she was succeeded by Ailsa Walker, one of an unbroken line of female caseworkers employed by EJHS. Perhaps the most notable in this capacity during the Society's middle years was **Yvette DeGiobbi** (nee Lacombe), who served with EJHS for over 18 years (1969-1987).



EJHS AWARDS

June 2004

Certificate from Laurie Blakeman, MLA on behalf of the Alberta Legislature

- Acknowledging the work of EJHS Volunteers.

Recipient: Lenore Fagnon (EJHS Volunteer)

June 2005

Canadian Mental Health Award

- For promoting good mental health practices for both staff and residents.

Recipient: John Weeks

June 2006

Alberta Solicitor General and Public Security Award

- Recognizes those teams who achieved service excellence with clients

Recipient: Bridges Treatment Program at Howard House

Men of Honour Award

- One who acts in meaningful ways to foster respect, encourage healthy relationships and create positive opportunities for people

Neil Harris - April 2007



Robin Murray - April 2008



Governor General's Award Recipient, John Mould (past Moard Member) presented by Maureen Collins

Evolution of Client Services

In the first 20 years, services provided by John Howard Societies in Alberta largely consisted of helping offenders released from incarceration. This included providing funds for transportation from the institution to their original home locale, along with clothing and basic supplies, as needed. Clients were also assisted in finding employment. If required, some support could be provided to the families of incarcerated and recently released offenders.

Supervisory services provided by JHSA to the Remission Service of Canada for men on **Ticket of Leave** started in 1951. This led to a steady increase in cases being handled by JHSA offices across Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge. A large part of JHS staff work consisted of interviews with prospective clients (usually at the prisons or soon after their release). Based on the results of these interviews, clients were accepted as "caseloads." The number of caseloads rose dramatically during the early fifties, from 812 in 1949 to a high of 3,566 in 1953, thereby putting considerable strain on the human resources of the three primary offices. Caseloads for the Edmonton office, alone, rose from 1,663 in 1951 to 2,536 in 1956.

Loads were initially reduced in 1954, when the JHSA Board decided to change its policies on accepting cases. Emphasis was now on clients who "agreed to cooperate on rehabilitation plans beyond survival needs, job placement and first pay." In the first year after this policy was adopted, the caseload numbers dropped to 1,631. Despite this change, by 1959 the number of caseloads peaked again at 2,995.

In 1955, the JHSA Board also decided to reduce the amount of financial outlay provided to clients and to focus, instead, on personal counselling for offenders.

1958

Executive Committee approved the hiring of Robert Deidal as Executive Secretary of the Edmonton Office at the annual salary of \$6000 and that the Society pays 1/2 of his moving expenses from Vancouver

In the 1960s, JHSA was interested in exploring new approaches, avenues and programs to assist offenders. The concept of "*contact through sentence*" was generally practiced in this decade as a way of improving the chances for successful outcomes in working with offenders. Under this concept, offenders were interviewed early and repeatedly while still incarcerated so that an understanding of the needs of the individual could be established and trust built with Society staff.

John Ramoutar, Associate Secretary from 1967-1973, took a "hands on approach" to getting released offenders back into mainstream society. He established construction/repair teams who were contracted to do minor projects around the city and succeeded in securing a donated pick-up truck that could be used to move teams around with their tools. This innovative program lasted for as long as Ramatour was there to do the driving!



Offering a helping hand

In 1970, the **Clothing and Release Kit Project** was developed as another way of helping offenders reintegrate into society. Clothing was gathered from a variety of sources and brought to the Industrial Arts Room at St. Luke's School where some 20 women from the Catholic Women's League repaired and ironed the clothes to make them usable. The clothing was then distributed to clients through the District Office. The Project was cancelled in 1974 due to space challenges and because clients could now be referred to a number of other social agencies in the community to meet these needs.

Beginning in 1981, EJHS took a more active role in assisting offenders to secure employment with the creation of the **Employment Assistance Program**.

In 1982, EJHS initiated the **Judicial Interim Release Assistance Program (Bail Program)** to help those who could not raise sufficient bail for release from jail while awaiting their hearing.

The employment/training initiative from the 1970s reached a new level of development in 1986 with the establishment of the **Straight Goods Industries** project. This social entrepreneurial project operated as a furniture business/employment training opportunity for six years. It was finally closed down due to lack of storage space and growing competition from business and furniture distribution organizations. **LEEP** (Learning Employment Enhancement Program) succeeded the Straight Goods program in 1986, offering classroom learning with community work experience.

In 1990, EJHS launched **PLUS** (Progressive Learning with Us), a literacy program that matched community volunteers and tutors with clients. In 1992, **OAP** (Opportunities Avenues Program) was started as a computer assisted learning program for adults in the day or evening. OAP was followed by the **Alternative Learning Program**. Today, EJHS continues its focus on education and employment skills through the **Adult Transition Learning Centre (ATLC)**. ATLC is a private accredited school that offers free educational, employment readiness and lifestyle skills programming for individuals who are motivated and committed to learn.



Long Term EJHS Staff - 15 or more years of service

(as of December 31, 2009)

Maureen Collins - 29 years

Peter Breen - 19 years

Charlotte Durham-Knight
- 24 years

*Judy Quinlan - 19 years

John Weeks - 19 years

Ann Howlett - 24 years

**Yvette de Giobbi - 18 years

Jay Schreiner - 24 years

Liz Lacika - 17 years

*Doug Seitsinger - 22 years

Dan Ritter - 17 years

Robin Murray - 20 years

Michelle Weeks - 17 years

*Janice Bardestani - 20 years

Trina Yarde - 16 years

*denotes retired or resigned

**denotes deceased

Residential Programs

During the period of innovation that characterized the 1960s for John Howard Societies in Alberta, the idea arose of establishing community residential centres (CRC's) - or halfway houses - based on a model developed at St. Leonard's in Chicago.

The Calgary District set up a committee to study this concept and by 1968 proposed a plan to open its first CRC. However, the plan failed due to lack of funding and staffing resources. In response to this setback, JHSA created a provincial committee in 1969 to look into CRC's for both Calgary and Edmonton.

The Edmonton District, under the leadership of John Ramoutar, moved ahead independently of the provincial body and opened its first CRC, **Howard Manor**, on February 1, 1970. In its early years, Howard Manor was managed by **Cliff Pope**. Howard Manor, now Howard House, continues to serve the Edmonton community by providing care and treatment to young males with mental health and/or addictions problems through the Bridges Treatment Program. This program offers a unique partnership opportunity for service providers that target this population.

Although successful with Howard Manor, there were challenges to opening and operating additional facilities. A second CRC in Edmonton, which opened in 1976, was forced to close in 1978 due to financial difficulties.

In 1982, EJHS opened a new halfway house, **Independence Apartments**, which provided accommodation for males on bail and on temporary absence from the provincial system. The original Independence Apartments was operated in partnership with the Alberta Solicitor General as a provincial program for male offenders. By the late 1980s, it became a federal halfway house and, to the best of our knowledge, was the first federal halfway house opened in a residential

1960

Executive
Committee of
JHSA
approved the
employment
of a new
Edmonton
caseworker -
Mr. R.
Gilliland from
Vancouver -
who had been
hired without
involvement
of the
Personnel
Committee

neighbourhood that operated with the full support of neighbours, businesses, the community league and Edmonton Police Service. The original building eventually closed and re-opened next door in a much larger 35-bed facility. The current goal of Independence Apartments is to work with individuals in reintegration and preparation for independent living in the community.

If it wasn't for Satellite House, I might still be in Ponoka [hospital].

Former resident of Satellite House

1986 marked the opening of the **101st Street Apartments** for offenders with mental health issues, bringing the total number of residential properties managed by EJHS to three. 101st Street Apartments offer a supported residency program, to aid in the transition between incarceration and community living. In 1999, EJHS opened **Satellite House** to provide follow-up and continued support beyond the residency program offered by 101st Street Apartments.

Although Howard House had served youth with criminal justice status for many years, by 2000 youth workers in EJHS's REE*START program identified a need to connect and provide support to "at risk" youth in the community. The REE*START program is a community based support program that works with vulnerable youth to help them make healthy life choices. In response to this need, EJHS opened a new residential program in 2008, called **The Loft**. The Loft provides supportive housing for "at hope" youth who are seeking to build brighter futures and lead positive and productive lives.



Services for Victims of Crime

As a values-driven organization, EJHS is always looking for new areas in which to live out its values. One such area is the realm of Victims and Restorative Justice, reflecting the Board's recognition that the Society's mandate goes beyond offender reintegration.

In 1993, the Society undertook a needs analysis that identified a gap for victims who were going through the court process after charges had been laid. The **Victims Assistance Program** was created in 1993 and since 1999 it has worked exclusively with victims of family violence who are going through the court system. Today, EJHS is part of an integrated victims' service organization that includes the Crown, Police, the courts and EJHS support workers in both docket court and trial court for victims of family violence.



Also in 1999, EJHS dramatically increased its work with victims of family violence by assuming responsibility for the **Family Violence Prevention Centre (FVPC)** and incorporating it into the Society. Through the Centre, EJHS works with many partners and offers a variety of services to help families impacted by family violence. Outreach services include information and referral, emotional support, advocacy, safety planning and risk assessment, and connection with other community services. It has also established a long-term partnership with ASSIST Community Services Centre to deliver outreach services and educational services on family violence in the Chinese community.

They were there for me...we felt so safe in there, me and my children....If the Victims' Assistance Program wasn't there...I might have gone back into the same situation
Client of Victims Assistance Program

Social Development

In the early 1980s, EJHS moved into the wider arena of crime and its impact on the community by participating in crime prevention programs, such as the **Edmonton Crime Prevention Week** and the National Crime Prevention Week. This was the beginning of a significant shift in focus for EJHS, from penal reform and offender reintegration to promoting understanding of the community responsibility for crime prevention.

By this time, there was a growing recognition among social workers, community leaders, teachers and



Fall Fest Carnival

policymakers that crime existed in our communities because of a series of underlying social issues. Poverty, unemployment, substance addictions, discrimination, family instability and poor education all played a role in encouraging criminal behaviour by engendering feelings of desperation and hopelessness among people marginalized by the community. These professionals understood that, unless the underlying issues were effectively addressed, crime would continue and potentially increase. Gradually, they recognized that working to reduce these impediments would create far more opportunities for preventing crime than would increased incarceration and punishment. This approach was characterized as *crime prevention through social development*.

Getting **Tough on Crime** became the EJHS slogan in the 1990s - but its meaning was very different from that associated with the concept today. For EJHS, getting Tough on Crime meant encouraging communities to reduce or prevent crime by "fighting" the social ills that encouraged criminal activity. In this regard, EJHS became increasingly proactive in its programs

and services. The new Strategic Plan, a Board initiative in the 1990s, reflected these directions. Community Development, Human Resource Management, Public Awareness and Direct Service Delivery were all now integral elements of the EJHS vision for the future.

EJHS continued to be a central player in the greater Edmonton social services and non-profit sector throughout the 1990s and into the next millennium. EJHS Executive Director, **Maureen Collins**, was part of a dynamic team brought together under the leadership of Correctional Service Canada and Jan Fox, newly appointed Warden, to find an Edmonton site for the Edmonton Institution for Women (EIFW). After much controversy and many community consultations, a permanent site was found in the west end and the prison opened in 1995 - with a new approach and new philosophy, as described in the document, *Creating Choices*.

From 1995 onwards, Maureen and her staff worked in collaboration with other non-profit organizations to develop an organizational change process that would make EJHS more responsive to the changing demographic and new face of Edmonton. Several years of work culminated in a research project that Maureen completed in New Zealand while on the prestigious Muttart Fellowship. Her research was published in the book, *Responding to Diversity* (2006), a roadmap for organizational change.



Evening in China fundraiser 2009

More EJHS AWARDS

October 2007

Bronze Award of Excellence for Quality from the Canada Awards for Excellence and National Quality Institute
- Recognizing superior client service and business excellence practices.

Recipient: Bridges Treatment Program at Howard House

November 2007

Bronze recipient of the Premier's Award of Excellence
- Recognizing superior client service and business excellence practices.

Recipient: Bridges Treatment Program at Howard House

2007

Pyramid Award sponsored by PLENA (Public Legal Education Network of Alberta)

- For Excellence in public legal education in the province

Recipient: EJHS - Public Legal Education Program (shared by all the Public Education programs at the 6 local societies)

May 2008

Eleanor Grant Award - Canadian Mental Health Association
- Edmonton Region

- Acknowledges an individual within the Edmonton region who demonstrates outstanding vision and leadership as well as innovation in addressing service gaps within the mental health field.

Recipient: Denise Magis



October 2008

John Howard Society of Canada Award -
Humanitarian Services

- For excellence in leadership and delivery of direct service to those we serve

Recipient: John Weeks



October 2008

John Howard Society of Canada Award -
Community Service

- For outstanding voluntary service within the community of Edmonton

Recipient: Michelle Andrews

Public Education and Awareness

In many respects, people see crime as something that happens to "other people," perpetrated by individuals who are predisposed to criminal behaviour and, therefore, not part of "our community." Because of this prevailing attitude, John Howard Society staff and volunteers have long recognized the importance of raising public awareness of social justice issues with respect to penal reform, rehabilitation and the reintegration of offenders into the community.



From its early days, EJHS regarded public awareness and acceptance as crucial to the success of the Society. As such, public education through special presentations at other agencies, service clubs, churches, schools, the print media and radio were always a component of EJHS activities.

The need to educate the public made it necessary to ensure staff and volunteers had the most current information about trends and practices in meeting the needs and providing services to offenders. Conferences offered an effective way to keep staff and volunteers up to date. In 1957, JHSA organized the first Red Deer Conference (although Red Deer did not have an office at this time, it was considered a central location) for its staff, volunteers and interested parties. In January 1962, EJHS organized its first **Institute of Corrections** conference.

The conference was a success and initiated a series of similar annual conferences, including Calgary JHS's first Spring Seminar in 1963.

By 1965, the Edmonton District operated a very active Speaker's Bureau, with EJHS representatives appearing on four television programs, participating in 10 radio broadcasts and making 21 presentations to various local groups.

Another interesting example of the District's outreach efforts was the decision, in 1966, to have a booth at Klondike Days (although not budgeted for and, therefore, the cause of some financial tension!).

Despite the success of these public education activities, the need far outweighed the volunteer (and staff) resources to meet it. In 1970, the decision was made to cancel the Annual Winter Conference to enable the Society to develop a funding proposal for a full time staff member who could respond to requests from city schools for presentations. The



John Howard in our community

objectives of the program were to enable students to examine and possibly find non-delinquent alternatives to existing delinquent behaviour; to strengthen their respect for the law; and to arouse their concern about current social problems. A successful seven month demonstration project was undertaken, often using ex-offenders as spokespeople to offer a meaningful and unique perspective on crime and its consequences.

In 1979, EJHS established a **Public Education** department that targetted high school students and concerned adults. School talks were expanded to elementary students in 1981 and junior high students in 1982. In 1984, the department piloted the **Youth Program** to educate students in the vocational/occupational programs related to the young offenders' justice system. This was the precursor to today's extremely popular **Criminal Justice Education (CJE)** program.

In addition to raising criminal justice issues with youth, EJHS also began to see a role for itself in educating the general public about crime. Specifically, public education focussed attention on the underlying factors and how these can be ameliorated so that criminal behaviour is not the inevitable outcome for anyone.

Toward the Next 60 Years

Edmonton John Howard Society has provided 60 years of service to the Edmonton community. It has grown tremendously over the past six decades, from a fledgling district with extremely limited resources and a huge (and sometimes not clearly defined) mandate, to a multi-million dollar Society with over 100 staff and a range of targetted programs and services that meet a variety of community needs.



Volunteer / Staff Appreciation 2009

The future for EJHS looks equally bright and exciting. While we continue to struggle with the many social and economic challenges that underlie criminal activity, we now share that work with a host of community organizations, three levels of government and an increasingly engaged population. Our voice has been heard and the community has responded with interest, concern and compassion. Crime is no longer seen as something that "happens to other people" - it is understood to be a complex social issue that affects all of us and, therefore, we all have a role to play in its prevention.

EJHS will continue to emphasize crime prevention through public education and increased understanding of crime dynamics. Our programs and services will continue to reach out to those impacted by crime: offenders, ex-offenders, victims of crime, family members and young people who are at risk of criminal involvement. And through restorative justice practices we will continue to promote restorative approaches to best meet the needs of victims and offenders.

The values that brought together a small group of concerned citizens in the late 1940's remain the heart of EJHS today. We continue to share their compassion for offenders and their families, their commitment to treating all individuals with equal respect and acceptance, and their passion for improving the conditions and lives of those impacted by crime. As it was in 1949, EJHS today is about people helping people to reach their full potential as members of society. The true heroes of EJHS are all those who have made the commitment to turn their lives around. We are proud of their accomplishments and honoured to have been part of their journey.

As we embark on our next 60 years, we will remain true to our core values as we work to achieve our vision and mission: to prevent crime, help people affected by crime and eradicate the root causes of crime so that, together, we can create safety and harmony in our community.

ONWARD!



Team Building
EJHS Staff Retreat

Ribbon Cutting - The Loft 2008
Liz Lacika and Denise Magis



Jay
Schreiner



Robin Murray



Cheerleader par excellence,
Joelle Banasch-Campbell

Staff Retreat,
Maureen
Collins



Management Team 2009

Staff Retreat - 1992





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