



## TRANSITION NEWSLETTER

SAFETY AND HARMONY IN OUR COMMUNITY

You can change a life!



When you make a charitable donation to Edmonton John Howard Society you are helping people like Zara, who has been supported and empowered by our REE\*START youth program to make healthy choices for herself and her daughter.

"At the age of 14 I got pregnant. After I had my daughter, I stayed in an abusive relationship with my daughter's father. She was a happy healthy baby girl and my pride and joy but the relationship wasn't getting better, in fact it was worse. I thought it was better to stay so she had both parents, but I finally left after he assaulted me at an LRT station.

Shortly after, my life was turned upside down when she was taken away from me. I started partying a lot to numb the pain. Drinking every day, doing drugs, suicide attempts and so on. I lived in various group homes and I dropped out of school more than once. I fought for two years to get my daughter back but wasn't successful.

At 17, I got my own place with the help of one of the group homes but that didn't last too long. Not even a year later I was couch surfing. This continued for years. I was never anywhere for long. My addictions started to get worse. I did my best to hide it from friends and family. Occasionally I'd sober up on my own. I never went to detox or treatment as I always felt it was a waste of time and effort. My sobriety would usually only last until things got to be too much for me to handle.

Three years ago things changed for me and I was no longer homeless. It felt amazing to have a place to call my own, but it didn't change the fact that my addiction had a hold of me. I stopped using one day – and a few weeks later I found out I was pregnant. My now 14-month-old daughter has changed me for the better. I stopped letting my addiction have a hold of me and started focusing on being the best I can be for my little girl.

I've been sober for almost two years. Through all of this, I've always had the greatest support from everyone at REE\*START. If it wasn't for all the wonderful and amazing people there I don't know where I would be. They have seen me at my worst and watched me become who I am today. They have gone above and beyond to be there to help and be supportive no matter what. Thank you!"

Please use the donor form on the back page to support our work in helping people like Zara. Your donation shows that you believe in our vision to promote safety and harmony in our community. As a donor, you will receive our Transition newsletter, invitations to agency events and the opportunity to have a real impact on some of our community's most vulnerable people.

## EJHS achieves 3-year accreditation

After years of planning, preparation and hard work, our agency achieved three-year accreditation by CARF (Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities) in November 2016. Accreditation assures our funders, staff, people served and the broader community that our programs and facilities are of the highest quality.



“Our internal accreditation process was achieved by the professionalism and hard work of our staff including our supervisors and Senior Leadership Team, all of whom worked and continue to work to ensure our clients receive the best possible service,” says Robin Murray, EJHS Executive Director. “Key to our success was the steadfast leadership of Ann Howlett our Director of Quality Improvement and Evaluation. Ann put in countless hours throughout this process and continues to work to ensure our process and practice meet the highest standards.”

We chose CARF as our accreditor because its values most closely mirror our own, in particular that:

- All people have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- All people should have access to needed services that achieve optimum outcomes.
- All people should be empowered to exercise informed choice.

While client focus is central to CARF accreditation, it also requires agencies to meet organizational standards that demonstrate the strong business practices needed to maintain funding and attract new funders and opportunities.

CARF is an international, non-profit accrediting body that has been operating since 1966. It researches, develops and applies international standards for the delivery of effective person-centered interventions and supports. These standards then provide the foundation on which accredited agencies develop quality programs that are responsive to clients.

### What they said:

The CARF surveyors who visited our agency in the summer of 2016 cited a number of key factors that demonstrate our agency’s commitment to excellence, including:

- The organization is recognized for its development of services to meet the needs of the persons served and is focused on the evidence-based practices. It has earned the reputation for being a best practice service provider under the leadership of the current Executive Director.
- The longevity of the staff members reflects a devoted team that values gaining expertise in the field. Their expertise is important in meeting organization’s mission and goals.
- The organization has a positive reputation with funders and grantors who point to the agency’s responsiveness, enthusiasm, professional leadership and well-trained staff that desire to continue working with the society.



## Drug Treatment Court: True Grit, True Imagination

Pamela Spurvey, a mentor with the Edmonton Drug Treatment Court, has shown true grit in her ten-year journey from addiction and mental health challenges to wellness and health. In October 2017, Pamela received the True Grit award from the Lieutenant Governor’s Circle on Mental Health and Addictions. The True Grit Awards honour successful efforts to reduce stigma, encourage recovery and strengthen programs and services in the area of mental health and addiction.

From the Lieutenant Governor's Circle on Mental Health and Addictions website:

Pamela Spurvey is a devoted mother of five and grandmother of three. She is very engaged in her career as a Peer Support Worker for Alberta Health Services, working with the inner city population. Pam hasn't always had this life – in fact, after a very traumatic and tumultuous childhood, she spent many years feeling hopeless and believing there was no way out. She spent many years lost in the grips of addiction and mental health challenges, however with the help of a supportive community, self-help groups and guidance from health care providers, she gained the confidence needed to achieve wellness.

Notably, this is not Pamela's first award from the Lieutenant Governor's Circle on Mental Health and Addictions. Two years ago, she was part of the Edmonton Drug Treatment Court team that won the True Imagination Award. The recognition is well-deserved. We are so proud of you Pam!

### Walk with Me – Indigenous Mentorship and Liaison pilot project

How can Edmonton John Howard Society acknowledge past events and work towards a stronger and healthier future for Indigenous people? This is the question we asked ourselves and our Indigenous clients in response to the 2015 Truth & Reconciliation Commission (TRC) final report. Their answer was simple: Walk with Me.

Walk with Me is a 3-year pilot project, now entering its second year. With grant funding from the Edmonton Community Foundation and the Urban Initiatives Program of the Alberta Indigenous Relations office, we hired a full-time Aboriginal Advisor and Mentor, Jeri Melting Tallow-Healy, to guide our walk.

Jeri works directly with individual clients in our community and residential programs to meet their cultural needs. She also provides staff training and is helping to strengthen organizational policies and practices to enhance our ability to serve Indigenous people. Jeri's work includes Aboriginal Awareness Training (AWT) for all agency staff, the formation of an EJHS Truth & Reconciliation Working Group, and review of relevant policies and practices related to smudging and memorials for Indigenous clients.

Other highlights from our first year include:

- Indigenous entertainment at our Client Appreciation Barbeque last summer.
- Staff participation in Aboriginal History Month.
- A presentation to staff by the Sixties Scoop Indigenous Society of Alberta.

Honoring memories, planting dreams is an annual event planting hearts in memory of the children lost to the Indian residential school system and to honor residential school survivors and their families and the legacy of Truth and Reconciliation Commission.



## FINDing a new home



We all know that setting up a new home for the first time is costly – even with help from our families and friends. Those fleeing an abusive relationship often start with nothing at all. That’s why the Family Violence Prevention Centre (FVPC) partners with Find, an initiative of Homeward Trust Edmonton, to provide essential furnishings, free of charge, to help the people we serve make a new start. In 2017, the FVPC Furniture Program in partnership with Find helped over 50 families, each with their own story. Here, Natasha, a FVPC Community Liaison Worker, tells “Mary’s” story (name has been changed).

I picked up Mary and her three-year old daughter early Monday morning. They were in incredible spirits. Both mother and daughter chatted away during our commute to Find. Mary had told me at her intake appointment that they had just left the shelter and secured a home for their fresh start. But they had very little furniture and had been sleeping on a crib mattress on the floor.

We met up with Diane at Find who walked us through the selection process. Mary was incredibly appreciative of every table, chair, shelf and lamp. Diane also found some amazing pictures that would fit in with Mary’s design style. Mary was so moved by Diane’s consideration that she immediately hugged her – while her daughter hugged every employee within arm’s reach! That day, there were no dressers available, but Diane told Mary not to worry that they would find her one. As we returned to the vehicle and headed to Mary’s new home, her daughter clutched the new teddy bear given to her by the Find staff.

The next day I met the Find delivery crew at Mary’s home. The townhouse was empty, except for a number of boxes filled with donated items that were given to Mary and her daughter when they left the shelter. There was an abundance of clothes, boots, toys and various other items. Mary was overwhelmed by the kindness of the people at the shelter but explained that the shelter did not have access to furniture. She and her daughter were elated as the crew brought in each item and put it in the specified room. True to her word, Diane had found Mary’s daughter a lovely pink dresser that had been recently donated to Find. Both mother and daughter were overjoyed as Mary described how she would decorate her little girl’s new bedroom.

When everything had been delivered and set in place, Mary said The Furniture Program and Find had given her a new start. She now had the ability to make a home for her and her daughter. “Programs like this give people the chance and strength to break away from bad situations. I will be forever grateful.”

“My experience over the years has demonstrated to me how difficult it is for victims of family violence to break away from the cycle of abuse,” says Natasha. “Often, they are reliant on their partner financially and have young children to consider. Find is a remarkable resource for these families and for our community.”

When you donate to Find, your preloved furniture and housewares help in two ways. Either they go directly to a person in need, or proceeds from the sale of those items to the public are reinvested in the program. Please visit [www.findedmonton.com](http://www.findedmonton.com) for more information.

I want to participate in the work of Edmonton John Howard Society. I would like to support crime prevention and reduce the impact of crime in my community.

My/Our tax deductible donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is enclosed.

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Donations can also be made online through CanadaHelps at [www.johnhoward.org](http://www.johnhoward.org)