

FALL 2008

The Bridge

The John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland of BC

Change is Possible!

With last night's American Presidential Election fresh in my mind I could not resist including Barack Obama's statement, "If there is anyone out there who still doubts that America is a place where all things are possible, who still wonders if the dream of our founders is alive in our time, who still questions the power of our democracy, tonight is your answer...It's the answer spoken by young and old, rich and poor, Democrat and Republican, black, white, Latino, Asian, Native American, gay, straight, disabled and non-disabled...let us ask ourselves – if our children should live to see the next century...what change will they see? What progress will we have made? This is our chance to answer the call. This is our moment. This is our time!"

To move our Agency forward I have been exploring our Agency's past. Recently, I read Dr. Guy Richmond's book, **Prison Doctor**, to gain greater insight as to why Guy Richmond Place was named after him. I was shocked to see this book, published in 1975, still highlighted many of the challenges facing persons incarcerated and the correctional system today. Much progress has been made but the overarching challenges remain.

The general cause of crime remains one of those challenging issues. In October, at the BC

Crime Prevention and BC Criminal Justice Association Conference I presented meta-analysis findings highlighting factors associated with General Causes of Crime. The greater the number of factors the more likely the predictability of crime including:

- Being born into a family in relative poverty and inadequate housing
- Troubled home life, brought up with inconsistent and uncaring parenting, including violence and abuse,
- Limited Social and Cognitive Abilities,
- Behavioural Problems in Elementary School,
- Poor performance, absenteeism, excluded from or dropping out of Secondary School,
- Living in a culture of violence on television and in the neighbourhood,
- Frequently unemployed and with relatively limited income,
- Having a criminal family member (gangs),
- Peer pressure, unaddressed mental illness or abuse of alcohol or other drugs.

The John Howard Society of BC recently supported an initiative to bring each region together to share resources, strengthen our network and uniformly promote common goals to make our

communities safer for all. This initiative was supported by the John Howard Society of Canada that will be working with the Provincial and Territorial Societies to provide greater understanding of national criminal and social justice issues impacting Canadians and the communities we live in. Addressing general causes of crime will be the focus of this initiative.

I believe change is possible and encourage others to endorse Barack Obama's pledge to make the next century a better place. Through our collective persistence in addressing the causal factors of crime hopefully the next author, like Dr. Guy Richmond, will highlight correctional progress and how safe our communities have become by supporting persons who are different and in need of assistance.

- Tim

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Prison to the Community – Preventing Homelessness

Andrea and Pam, Homelessness Partnership Initiative (HPI) Outreach workers, are proud of their success in the newly created 'Prison to the Community – Preventing Homelessness' program. Since it began in January 2008, Andrea and Pam have networked with outside agencies and have created positive working relationships with institutional staff, probation officers and federal community corrections offices. These relationships are important because they allow the HPI program to play a key role in helping offenders make a smooth transition from prison to the community.

Since January 2008, Andrea and Pam have placed over 100 clients into safe, affordable housing. Some placements have occurred directly from the institution. Others have been facilitated when an offender has been released into the community. They have made all these housing placements at a time when housing shortages in Vancouver have reached historic lows. In October 2008 the Vancouver Sun reported that the occupancy rate for bachelor and studio apartments in the Lower Mainland was at 0.3%, while the rest of the country was reporting occupancy rates of 4.0%.

Many HPI clients remain in contact with Andrea and Pam once they are placed into safe, affordable housing. This contact allows the HPI team to further support these clients in accessing community based resources such as employment programs, mental health services, and recreation and leisure activities – all of which help this at-risk-for-homelessness population maintain safe, affordable housing over the long term.

In January 2008 Andrea and Pam, began working with a client named 'Bob'. Bob, a 51 year old inmate, had a son who died during open heart surgery. Unable to cope with the pain of losing his son, Bob turned to drugs for comfort. Before long, Bob was addicted to heroin, became involved in criminal activity to feed his addiction, and was later sentenced to a provincial jail for a drug-related crime.

While incarcerated inside the Fraser Regional Correctional Centre Bob put in a request to see the HPI team. Andrea and Pam



began meeting with Bob to help him create a release plan and set some goals for his eventual return to the community. Bob was motivated to stay off drugs, hence, once he left jail, they were able to place Bob into affordable housing and supply him with a BC Non-Profit Housing Society Starter Kit.

Bob continues to call the HPI team on a weekly basis to update them on his progress. Since his release, Andrea and Pam have helped Bob write a resume, apply for a job with the Salvation Army and practice his job interview skills – they even

took him shopping at a local Value Village so he could buy an appropriate outfit to wear on a job interview. Wonderfully, Bob got the job he applied for at the Salvation Army. Today, Bob's employment requires him to advocate for homeless people who come to the Salvation Army in search of food and shelter. Bob is no longer on social assistance and wishes that others in his position could have the support of the HPI team to help them make a smooth transition into the community from prison.

The HPI Outreach team recognizes that Bob had a desire to make positive changes to his life. They, in turn, appreciated having the ability to work with Bob to help him find a place to live, get a job and begin the process of rebuilding his life. Now, whenever Andrea or Pam feel discouraged about the lack of available housing in the Lower Mainland, they think of Bob and how far he has come. They hope there will be many more success stories like that of Bob's in the days and weeks to come.

- Elaine



Abbotsford Air Show

Miller Block and Vancouver Apartments attended this year's Air Show. The Snow Birds made their thundering appearance before the rain came to wash the crowds away. Other jets and carriers were on display to tour while keeping us dry from the drizzle. Our soggy feet and sore ears were mended when we approached the mini doughnut stand. What a delight!

- Laura

Prostitution Issues in our Neighbourhood

Recently a Dickens's community member asked the question - "Is it worth calling the police when one witnesses public acts of prostitution and would the police be able to do something about it?" The woman asking the question was walking her dog at 7 am when she encountered a car in her own back alley. As she walked by she noticed a man with his pants down and an exploited woman performing oral sex on him. Neither the man nor the woman seemed to care that they were being observed. During this event a baby quietly slept, safely strapped into the back seat. Eventually the car left and the john threw his condom out at the end of the lane as he drove away.

This is a frequent occurrence in neighbourhoods where there is an active sex trade. What are the police doing or able to do about this? The Vancouver police Vice Unit is very active in a number of neighbourhoods including the Dickens Community. Recently, they expanded the John Sting program and made 57 arrests under section 213 of the Criminal Code in 4 days. The men arrested were attempting to pick up prostitutes but were unfortunate enough to try and pick the wrong woman.

Upon arrest the police take control of the john and determine if he meets the following criteria.

Does the john:

1. Have a recent or related criminal record?
2. Have anything on his person or in his vehicle that indicates mal-intent?
3. Take responsibility for the arrest?
4. Behave in a non-threatening and cooperative way during the arrest?

If the john meets the criteria then he is referred to the Prostitution Offender Program of BC (POPBC). Of the 57 johns arrested during the 4 day sting operation 40 have been referred to POPBC and are currently being processed through the program. The other 17 have been sent to court.

Since 1999, close to 1900 referrals have completed the program. The majority of referrals come from VPD but we have also had referrals from many other jurisdictions throughout BC. POPBC is an educational alternative within the criminal justice system which can be used by police as an alternative to court for first time offenders. All johns who do not meet the above criteria are referred to the courts.

This is a self funding program and excess funds generated by the program have been distributed to other agencies which help women to exit from street life and to agencies which conduct preventative education programs for youth. To date the program has distributed over \$120,000. This funding is generated by the fees charged to the johns and it is being used to help those who have been exploited.

Johns referred to POPBC must attend an intake interview, pay \$500 and then attend an eight hour school where they listen to the stories of people who have experienced the, so called, sex trade first hand. From these stories it is hoped that the men will gain an understanding as to the realities of life for exploited women on the streets.

It is hoped that with this new information, the men will make better decisions in the future.

We have many presenters: police, street nurses and others whose work exposes them to the street trade; parents who have experienced the sex trade because a child has been involved, and women who have been exploited on the streets. One of the presenters has been a community member who tells what it is like to live and/or work in a neighbourhood where active sex for cash transactions takes place. As it stands now, we are looking for a new community presenter. If you are or, if you know someone, whose everyday life is affected by prostitution and you would like to contribute to the education of johns, please contact Ian Mitchell at the John Howard Society (604) 872 5651 Local 305.

So, is it useful to complain to police about public prostitution? The answer is yes. Even if they are unable to respond immediately to your current complaint due to resource shortages or to other priorities, the complaint is recorded and it helps to encourage further action towards prostitution issues. The police, in many ways, are complaint driven so if you want something done about problems in your neighbourhood then call them in. Make your voice be heard.

- Ian

Justice Open Tournament

The 14th Annual Justice Open Golf Tournament, held June 13, 2008, was hosted by the John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland, the John Howard Society of British Columbia and the BC Criminal Justice Association. This year's event was an unmitigated success. After a day of golfing under sunny

skies, old and new friends alike, mixed and mingled over a sumptuous BBQ dinner, while watching the sun set over the picturesque hills of the Ledgewiew Golf and Country Club.

Proceeds raised at this year's silent auction event went towards funding youth based initiatives and public education on criminal justice issues. To learn more about these programs please visit our website at: www.jhslmbc.ca



Goal for a Paperless Office

As we move through 2008, we would like to use more electronic communication. We believe in keeping administrative costs as low as possible so we can get the funds directly to our clients. Please fill out the information below, cut this section out and mail it to us. Alternatively, you can send us an email with your own email address and a request that you receive future correspondence via email. Our email is: personnel@jhslmbc.ca

Your full name: _____

Your email address: _____

Thank you for responding!
The John Howard Society of the LM
763 Kingsway
Vancouver, BC V5V 3C2

My Volunteer/Work Experience

The John Howard Society introduced itself into my life in 2007. I was finishing my Criminology degree through Simon Fraser University, and realized besides volunteering, there had been no real practical knowledge during my whole undergrad. Having no idea what to do with a Bachelor's of Arts, I turned to the practicum program for the final semester. After reading their website, somehow I decided to apply with the John Howard Society. An interview was conducted, I was enrolled in the course, and they offered me a position within Community Services at head office. To be honest, I had no idea what I was doing.

As the months went on, it soon became clear that the John Howard Society was exactly where I wanted to be, and I was doing exactly what I wanted to do. The position required writing letters to clients in the two main provincial institutions in the Lower Mainland. These letters were for support, information, resources, taxes, direction, and almost anything under the sun. I was also taking care of office phone calls, faxing, mailing, and a number of walk-ins from clients, their families, or community members.

The John Howard Society applied for funding after the practicum ended and offered me a three month contract. I had such a great experience! I really got to see the heart and soul of the agency. I learned so much from that position. I cannot fit it all here!

At the end of 2007, I made a tough decision to leave the John Howard Society and travel. After four months around South East Asia, and three months skiing in the Kootenays, I was ready to return to Vancouver. The first place I visited was the John Howard head office. There was a graveyard position open four days of the week. No one had applied, so I did! Once again, I really had no idea what I was getting myself into.

Currently, I am working full time graveyards at Hobden House, and SFU accepted me into the honours cohort. Things are busier than ever! But much of the graveyard duties are behind the scenes. There is a lot of cleaning, filing, faxing, bed counts, screenings, emails, and notes. Nevertheless, *all* staff members are building relationships with the residents. This is the most important part and this happens at *all* hours of the day.

I still write letters to inmates, some for support and some for information. I finished my First Aid this year, Non-Violent Crisis Intervention training, OMS training, and I now complete screenings late at night.

I help residents with their taxes, computer skills, resume building, and any other knowledge I gained through Community Services. Next week, Pat is taking me to two federal institutions to conduct interviews. This job constantly grows, and with that, so does my understanding of it.

The John Howard Society has meant a great deal to me so far. I take their messages to heart and trust what direction they want to take. This is both my first time working in a halfway house, and working from midnight to 8am. So every day, I learn something new.

It feels like I am part of a team at John Howard. *All* house staff are very inclusive, welcoming, and supportive. They encourage me, direct me, and set great examples. The training, managers, and staff, are very helpful in the learning process. It is always ongoing, but no matter what questions I have (and ask Hobden, I have plenty!) there is always a comprehensive answer.

- Kailey



Health & Wellbeing PWD Conference

I recently attended the Health & Wellbeing in persons with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities Conference.

The first workshop I attended was called "Taught not Caught!" presented by Susan Mayson. She discussed some of the issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities (DD) in terms of their sexuality and sexual behaviors. The overall theme was that every human being is a sexual being, some to a greater extent than others. Every person has the basic right to sexual expression, and some require more support than others. Through anecdotes she discussed some of the challenges faced by the individuals she has worked with and how she has supported them. Examples involved finding adaptive tools to enable a young man with cerebral palsy, who was masturbating chronically, inappropriately and ineffectively to masturbate to completion. She discussed safety issues, the importance of teaching people the difference between public and private, sexual education and how to open up channels of communication. She emphasized that the most valuable teaching moment is the moment that an incident happens, what I learned from this was that in the future when a member of the community approaches us to complain of a client's inappropriate behavior, it would be most valuable to have him/her present to hear first hand how he has offended the individual rather than staff addressing the issue with him later.

The second workshop I attended, given by David Pitonyak, discussed the most effective practices of a behavioral therapist and how it is critical to support not only the individual themselves, but also

their support people. David emphasized the point that to be an effective caregiver, one must first take care of one's self. Organizations need to listen to the needs of their front line workers if they hope to get the best job performance out of them. He discussed the importance of having the right support person to fit with the individual you are supporting. Too often in our social support system, no effort is made to find a good fit. The most educated professional will not be able to accomplish anything if the individual being served doesn't like them, and similarly someone with little or no education who genuinely cares about the individual can have the greatest impact in their lives. There can be no therapeutic relationship if there is no rapport. One must not underestimate the importance of building a rapport with the client, this must come first and it generally takes time and effort. Our agency appears to be moving toward this model with our outreach programs, in terms of being flexible in assigning caseloads to staff with a consideration to which personalities provide the best fit with the individual to be served.

The final workshop I attended was called Effective Practices in behavioral supports. Unfortunately, this workshop was designed poorly with a panel of three diverse speakers (a behavioral therapist, a psychiatrist, and a psychologist – the owner of Behavioral Solutions, which we have contracted with in the past!). Each was given only 20 minutes to speak, which was an insufficient amount of time for any of them to produce anything useful. What they all agreed on was that in order to effectively treat any problem behavior, one must first

look at the whole picture when doing a full assessment. One must consider environmental factors (i.e. too many loud noises, or a disliked staff person), psychological factors (depression from death of a loved one, or anxiety from a recent move) and medical factors (a stomach ulcer causing pain, or deafness causing difficulty communicating). It was agreed by all that very few problem behaviors are a result of attention seeking. What many term to be negative attention-seeking behaviors can generally be ascribed to an individual's basic needs not being met. Some of the more relevant basic needs discussed were the need to have friends who are not staff, the need to contribute positively to one's community, and the need to have control over one's own life. Many of these needs are not being met for a current resident right now, and so he is presenting with a number of problem behaviors which are difficult to address due to loneliness (following staff around for entertainment), lack of productive involvement in his community (which would foster pride and self-esteem), and acting out due to a lack of personal choice in his life.

- Christina

Spousal violence in Canada 2006

Over 38,000 incidents of spousal violence were reported to 149 police services across Canada in 2006, accounting for about 15% of all reported violent incidents.

Spousal violence was most prevalent in Nunavut and Quebec in 2006, and least prevalent in British Columbia, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, according to police data.

In every province and territory, about 8 in 10 victims of spousal violence were women in 2006. Spousal abuse was twice as common between current partners as between former partners regardless of gender.

The most frequently reported violent offences among spouses were common assault (61%), followed by major assault (14%), uttering threats (11%) and stalking (8%). Common and major assaults were typically more prevalent in the western provinces and territories, while incidents of

stalking and uttering threats were more common in Quebec.

When males were victims of spousal violence, 23% were victims of major assault, compared with 13% of female victims. Stalking and uttering threats were more common among female victims than male victims.

Charges were laid by police in the majority (77%) of spousal violence incidents. Incidents involving female victims were more likely to result in a charge being laid than those involving male victims.

Among the provinces and territories, Manitoba, Ontario, Yukon and Nunavut saw the highest proportion of charges being laid for spousal abuse.

Note: This release is based on the study, "Spousal violence in Canada's provinces and territories", published today in the 2008 edition

of Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile.

Spousal violence refers to violence committed by legally married, common-law, separated and divorced partners.

Data came from a survey administered to 149 police services across Canada, covering about 90% of Canada's population in 2006. Disclosing spousal violence can be difficult for many victims. As such, not all incidents are reported to the police. This analysis is therefore limited to those incidents of spousal violence that are reported to the police.

Provincial and territorial variations in charging practices may be related to differences in the distribution of offence types across the country, as well as different policies and police resources.

79th Annual AGM

The John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland's 79th AGM was held on September 11, 2008, at the Medical Student Alumni Centre in Vancouver.

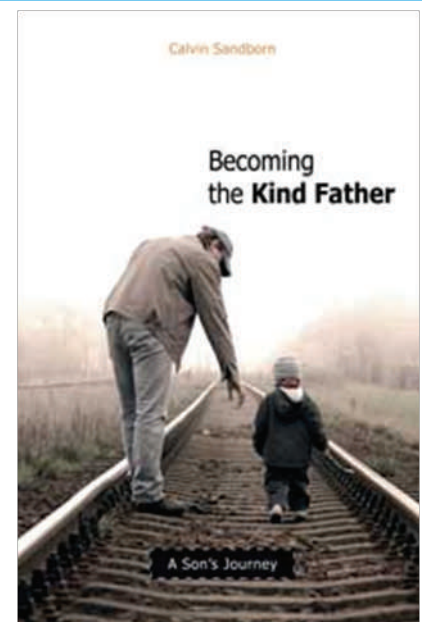
This year's keynote speaker was Calvin Sandborn, University of Victoria law professor and best-selling author of, 'Becoming the Kind Father'.

Earlier in the day, Calvin held a special workshop for John Howard staff, volunteers and practicum

students, Correctional Service of Canada psychologists and members of the West Coast Genesis Society on 'Becoming the Kind Father – Journey to a Man's Heart'.

Calvin's keynote address, held later in the evening, was a compelling mosaic of stories about Calvin's upbringing and his journey towards forgiveness and healing.

Books are available for \$15 or \$10 for members from the JHSLM. Contact personnel@jhslmbc.ca



**JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF THE
LOWER MAINLAND OF BC**

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#10754 2573 RR001
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Yes, I want to

Be a Member

Make a Donation

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Be notified of the Justice Open

Donate Clothes

Pass this newsletter along
to a friend

Price

\$15.00

Method of Payment

Check

Cash

Visa

Visa #

Exp. date

Signature

Total: _____

Name

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