

Spring 2009

The Bridge

The John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland of BC

A FISCAL YEAR IN REVIEW

With the fiscal year drawing to a close our Team has been preparing for the future and reflecting on the measurable outcomes of 2008-09. These measurable outcomes will be highlighted in our annual report that will be presented at our Annual General Meeting on Sept. 17, 2009.

Tremendous effort has been applied throughout the year to attract great people to join our team in volunteer and staff roles. I am truly impressed by the caring, principled and talented people that make the John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland an exceptional organization. Our Team efforts are demonstrated in the quality of life our clients and tenants have had this year.

Our client success has resulted in greater challenges to the Agency specifically in the areas of creating more housing and expanding our services to support many new people desiring the services of the Agency. Residential capacity at Vancouver Apartment, Miller Block, Guy Richmond Place and Hobden House have averaged 98% occupancy throughout the year. Community Living Services Outreach has added two new outreach team members, our Homeless Partnership Initiative exceeded expectations and received the support of the Vancouver Foundation for an added position to support persons secure housing and aftercare following release.

Through the support of Canada Mortgage and Housing we completed the renovation work at Tims Manor re-

sulting in an environment that provides clients the opportunity to "Live Up" and maintain their motivation to lead successful lives. Though there have been growing pains the program has begun to stabilize and has proven successful for many tenants.

Our Choices and Consequences program has grown exponentially and is in demand throughout the Lower Mainland. The program is focussing on Gang Prevention and problem solving. Our goal was to increase our presentations by 20%, the result has greatly exceeded this. The challenge is to secure funding to meet our requests for services. We are developing a marketing plan to raise funds and assist this service in meeting the community's need for education and support. We also renewed our Memorandum of Understanding with the Vancouver Police Department for referral services.

These successes have not been without their challenges. In February, Guy Richmond Place experienced a serious incident where a resident was shot in the alley behind the home while returning for curfew. This incident was one of several targeted incidents of violence that has occurred throughout the Lower Mainland. It remains unclear as to whether the victim of this incident was intended target. We are pleased to report that he survived this incident. However, this incident had far reaching effects to our neighbours, residents, staff and the community at large. The prevalence of brazen violence throughout

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our community is extremely troubling resulting in many sleepless nights. Our services promote change, rehabilitation and prevention, such incidents are not reflective of our history. Regardless these incidents produce fear and the need for greater interventions and transparency that promotes community safety is required.

I am very pleased with the support that was extended to our Agency from our Neighbours, Members, the Vancouver Police, the Correctional Service of Canada, Colleagues, and how our Residents, Volunteers and Staff supported one another. Our contingency plans assisted in a strategic response that supported those involved. Though we are unable to reverse all of the harmful effects of this incident we are optimistic it has resulted in greater understanding of the positive work we do.

The upcoming year has much for us to be extremely positive about. We are moving in a direction that will see increasing social supports that will produce a safer inclusive community for everyone to enjoy.

- Tim

NOT JUST A AGENCY...

When we first found out we had been chosen to attend the John Howard Society of Canada's National Staff Conference we were both honoured and excited. Honoured for the fact that the agency had chosen us to represent the John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland, excited that we were going to embark on a journey to a place we had both never been to. First on our mind was Parliament Building's, ice skating on the canal and strolling along Sutton Place Drive. We were not yet aware of the remarkable people that we were going to be given the opportunity to meet with, network with and share similar stories, unforgettable moments and pieces of advice with.

The trip started with an early morning plane ride which was a great time for us to catch up on what was going on with one another's program (that being Hobden House & HPI Program). Although we felt alone at first, we were able to contact the rest of our group upon boarding the plane. Upon landing, one of our own John Howard employees came to the realization that his luggage was just not being tossed down the chute onto the baggage carousel. Since the three of us did not all know each other very well, we had a ideal time to get acquainted while Air Canada attempted to come to a solution. The only solution at that time was sending this gentleman on his way with blow up PJ's and a poor excuse for a tooth brush. We jumped in the cab and were off into the cold Ottawa weather driving through the streets of Ottawa. We were in amazed with the beautiful landscape and found the houses to be original and quaint. We arrived at the hotel and were thrilled with our luxurious suites. We were definitely ready to call this place home for a couple of days. A wine and cheese reception was held so that everyone could register and become acquainted with one another. After meeting a lot of interesting individuals we were look-

ing forward for the conference to begin the following day.

After a rude awakening when the alarm clock went off and we realized the time change, we got ready for the day. We were guided to head to Knox Presbyterian Church which was around the corner from the hotel we were staying in. I think we both agreed that it was one of the most beautiful venues we had ever been in. It sure beat sitting around a stuffy conference room all day. It was then that we knew this was going to be the beginning of a great conference. Everyone attending appeared enthusiastic to be there. There was a sense of pride; everyone appeared proud to be part of such an outstanding agency. We were then given a guideline of the events for the following days and that is when we were faced with a difficult situation. There were so many unique, interesting forums being held and we had to pick the ones we wanted to attend. We ended up satisfied with our choices and in the end were able to bring a lot of significant, new information home to our co-workers. We had an artist in the group who was able to sketch a detailed portrait of all the presenters (Thanks Ryan!). If you wish to get the entire picture, contact Hobden House and you will be pleased with what you see. We were truly trying to catch all the amazing moments of every detail of the conference.

The guest speakers were amazing, we often found ourselves hanging onto their every word. Most memorable was Mrs. Mary Campbell, LL.M. Mary is the Director General of Corrections and Criminal Justice Directorate in the federal Department of Public Safety. Included in one of the many tasks Mary performs is providing advice and support to the Minister on public policy leadership in corrections and criminal justice vis-a-vis direction of the Correctional Service of Canada, and in regard to accountability to Parliament

for the National Parole Board. Mary's presentation was titled "Rage, Rage Against the Dying of the Light: the hope of audacity, courage and dignity in our times". We found it rather refreshing to listen to Mary present as she not only captivated us with her passionate language, she demonstrated that she completely understood what John Howard as an agency stands for and how such an agency like ours is instrumental to the success of corrections. Mary recognized that corrections is not all about the "lock em up and throw away the key" philosophy. She mentioned the use of alternative measures such as halfway houses being a key factor in the success of so many individuals. At one point in the presentation Mary mentioned that she would rather have a halfway house next door to her than a frat house as often the first of July parties get out of control! It was then we looked at one another and felt confident in the fact that although Mary held such a significant role in Corrections, she was clearly an advocate for the work that our agency did. That brought a smile to our faces and made us feel good. With listening to Mary speak, we felt like we were all playing on the same team. At the end of her speech, Mary took the time to thank everyone as an agency for doing such an outstanding job and contributing to the success of so many individuals in society. That is why Mary was by far the most memorable speaker presenting at the conference.

When going to John Howard Ottawa's head office we didn't quite know what to expect. Jet Lag doesn't quite describe it. Earlier in the day we had made a plan, once 12:30 hits we go back to our rooms SLEEP and then awake refreshed for the Party. It is funny how plans are truly meant to be broken because our quick trip to the mall ended up being a 5 hour walk around the city. When we returned to the hotel at 5:30 we were both exhausted. Our power nap

turned into a Clark Kent like clothes change and out the door immediately to catch the bus to the Ottawa office. We had made a pact while riding the elevator down to the lobby that we would stay a max of 2 hours and then turn in for the night. Well again the plan was destroyed... We were welcomed with enough pizza to fulfill an army along with one of the best musicians (Craig Jones ED for Canada and he is a great musician we aren't just sucking up) we have had the opportunity to meet. Initially there was the awkward tango as nobody really knew each other and then it happened; someone passed us shakers. Its funny how one small musical instrument can really make you feel included. We were officially part of the band. From that point on I believe I looked at Andrea and said well two hours is up and I don't know about you but I'm not going anywhere. In the time that we spent at the party I believe we had finally seen the bigger picture. We are not just a part of an office or a region, there is other like minded John Howard family beyond our realm and they face the same struggles as us. It was important to see that and more important that we had the opportunity to share our successes and failures with our new extended family. It was also equally important to see the other programs offered and expanding our resources not only province wide but country wide. If you would have told us that there was a 5, 10" John Howardly version of Dog the bounty hunter (actually her name is Bella) we would have laughed but she actually exists with the bail service program offered by John Howard Ontario. I would mention more names and programs but eventually we had met so many people that we started to call them by there geographical locations. Victoria, Kamloops and Saskatchewan were exceptionally fun to hang out with and I briefly remember showing Newfoundland My Nova Scotian tattoo. Feel free to inquire about the various programs that these other agencies have to offer at anytime. We

both would be more than happy to share with you what we took from meeting such individuals and we are sure that some of you may be pleasantly surprised to see what else John Howard has to offer. Although the conference has passed long ago, we are proud to say that we are keeping in touch with many of our fellow conference goers. Staying in touch with them not only allows us to relive those conference moments; it also gives us the confidence that we have someone to turn to, someone just like us who although may be in a different program in a different province, is most likely going through similar trials and tribulations. And that is why we have chosen to stay in touch.

At one point of the trip we were able to spend some time at dinner with two board members from the John Howard Society; Mrs. Sara Dewer and Mrs. J.C. Allan. We found this to be interesting because we were able to look around the dinner table and observe so many different dynamics of people but yet we all shared the common goal of working for and or with John Howard. It was a pleasure to meet with the board members and learn about where they came from and what brought them to John Howard. It is evident that each of those women bring something not only strong but significant to the agency. It was reassuring to know that the John Howard Society does not have a cookie cutter version of what a John Howard employee should look like. Instead, John Howard invites in all walks of life, all levels of education and all different types of personalities. In turn what we get is a well rounded agency that is made up of a diverse group of people. Without such a wide range of employees, we would not be able to produce the great work that we do, nor see the amazing outcomes that we do. We left dinner that night feeling confident after meeting the board members. Confident in the fact that while they share the same common goal, they are also working hard to not only

Keynote Speaker for AGM

JHS is pleased to announce the keynote speaker for our Annual General Meeting on September 17 2009 will be Derek Peterson, founder of Integrative Youth Development at the Institute for Community and Adolescent Resilience. For more information, visit the website at:

<http://www.icar-us.com>

consider but fulfill the needs and wants of the agency at the same time. We had hatched a plan that we would come back from Ottawa telling our co-workers how awful the trip was and how they were lucky to have not been bored by our counterparts from the east, but again plans rarely ever go as planned because from the moment we arrived in Ottawa to the moment we left it truly felt as though we had adopted a new family (despite the fact that Tim left us in Ottawa as we waited for 9 hours on standby). We let Tim off easy as we knew he was eager to dive into his Tim Horton's Turkey Clubhouse on the plane. By being delayed for eight hours, we not only got to see the Montreal Airport, we were also given a chance to further reflect with one another on our wonderful experience. It was an amazing gift the agency has given us and one we will not soon forget, this experience is something we couldn't help but share with everyone. If there is anything one takes from reading this article, let it be the mere fact that you should be proud and grateful to be part of such an amazing organization. Not too many people are able to fly across country and meet people that they feel they can so easily relate to on so many different levels. One may even call it a John Howard Bond.

- Andrea and Ryan

WORKING IN DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

Recently, we had the opportunity to attend a two day workshop led by Bob Shebib, an author of several counseling books widely used in the profession. Bob did an excellent job describing helpful tactics to use while working with confrontational clients, individuals with multi-barriers, and resistant involuntary clients. Bob provided opportunities to practice our newly acquired skills in role-plays, along with a homework project to obtain information from people without the use of questions. We found that most people were willing to open up more if they're given the chance to without questioning, and in their own time. Removing questions in a conversation also removes the counselor's agenda, thus, allowing the client to navigate through their own therapeutic experience. It's necessary to meet a person where they are in the world, and not where you feel

they should be. Quite simply, it's a client-centered approach to therapy.

Bob had us describe our most difficult client. If you can imagine, there were some very negative descriptions that presented our clients with major challenges and little hope it seemed. In the second part of the exercise, Bob requested we reframe our thinking and come up with our client's strengths and abilities. Simply reframing the description provided us with a warmer regard for them, and, in a way, a more hopeful regard for their situation. Vulnerability is not the lack of strengths, and on the contrary, strengths are not the absence of vulnerability. It's so important to see both sides of the coin when working with challenging individuals, not only will it add to their level of support, but it can also become a part of your own self care plan.

Bob had some helpful theories to keep in mind while dealing with our difficult clients. One that caught my attention is; whatever emotion a client projects onto you, or how they make you feel regularly, is actually how they themselves are feeling. Another consideration is that we have limited time with our client, limited time feeling this way, and then we go home to our lives, our happiness. Our client, in all likelihood, feels this way ALL the time. This is why power struggles and confrontations only add fuel to the fire. Let's step back and allow our client to find the source of their fire.

- Laura

GOAL FOR A PAPERLESS OFFICE

As we move through 2009, 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.

Your full name: _____

Your email address: _____

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

Fax: 604 872-8737

personnel@jhsImbc.ca



15th ANNUAL JUSTICE OPEN - SIGN UP NOW!

This year's "Justice Open" will be held on June 12, 2009, at Ledgeview Golf and Country Club in Abbotsford, BC. The John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland has partnered with the John Howard Society of BC and the BC Criminal Justice Association for this year's event. Networking and having fun is the goal of this tournament and we hope you will be able to join us. The format is Texas Scramble so all golfers regardless of skill level will have a great time. I hope to see you at the event.

If you are unable to attend and would like to support the tournament we have many sponsorship opportunities available from prize donations to the silent auction or random draws to hole sponsorships.

Visit our website to download golfer registrations or sponsorship forms at

www.jhslmbc.ca

Thank you for your support.



FOCUSING ON A COMMON GOAL

Guy Richmond Place strives to be the best CRF it can be for assisting individuals to become responsible citizens. Staff assists clients with goal setting, employment searches, and much more. We, as a team, felt that Guy Richmond would benefit in having a more concrete vision for our program. We agreed that it would be beneficial for us to sit down, discuss, and plan the future of Guy Richmond Place. We explored questions such as where does staff see GRP within the next 1 year, 2 years or 5 years? What do we want our program to look like? There are many ways an organization can explore these questions. For example you can utilize storyboarding, teambuilding exercises and have staff training seminars and staff meetings. Guy Richmond chose to use the method of a visioning. Some of the areas the GRP team focused on were staff satisfaction, resident responsibility, and the relationship between our house and other agencies within the community.

The visioning statement required two days of brainstorming and focused discussion. The first day we talked about how Guy Richmond Place could

improve our service to residents, the physical house, communication, administration and make the team work more effectively. We also talked about the kinds of support we could access from the community. These are only some of the questions brainstormed on the first day of the vision statement. After brainstorming, Guy Richmond staff, with the help of the Director of Programs, categorized the brainstorming by putting each idea into different groups such as staff concerns, program goals and resident needs. Following the categorization, a strategic plan was completed. This consisted of the area of focus, and suggestions on how to make that area of focus work. For instance, with staffing, it was agreed that new relief staff should go from 2 training shifts at each house, to 3 training shifts at each house. From there, we discussed strategies to make the 2 extra training shifts more effective.

The final day of the vision statement consisted of a follow up on strategies and the creation of a mission statement suitable for Guy Richmond Place. Staff conversed about how the

strategic planning was evolving, and the progress Guy Richmond had made since the last session. At the very end of the day, everyone put their head together to create a mission statement. As a team through the visioning process we realize that our mission is to create a homelike environment that assists individuals to become responsible citizens.

Visioning helped us by focusing on our team on a common goal. We are now all on the same page. At first my thoughts were 'why do we have to do this?' and as the discussion continued many other team members had the same concerns as myself. I must admit, there was some conflict however we were able to work through this process by listening to one another and providing constructive feedback. Now, I am thankful we carried out the vision statement as it has made our team bond and connect with one another. I would like to thank everyone for making the vision statement a success.

- Shianne

FETAL ALCOHOL SPECTRUM DISORDER CONFERENCE

In March, I attended 3rd International Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Conference for four days in Victoria . On the ferry ride over, I heard people talking to others about where they were going, and I heard many people say that they were heading to the same place I was.

There were more people than I expected to see at a conference, I never thought that there could be so many people interested in this disorder. I was eagerly anticipating my upcoming training sessions to see what they had to offer. There were 8 training sessions that I chose to attend which were; Motivational Interviewing for individuals with FASD, Youth with FASD and the Youth Criminal Justice System in Canada, Providing services for Youth with FASD in conflict with the Law, Education and Awareness of FASD for Justice Professionals, Re-establishing a Cultural Identity in Female Adult Indigenous Offenders with FASD, FASD programs for At-risk mothers, Families and Parents with FASD, and Changing Public Policy

related to FASD in the Juvenile and Criminal Justice System. All were very informative, and presented by professionals who has many years of knowledge and experience to share. Each session offered training about how to deal with the specific individual who has FASD, discussions and questions to the presenters, as well as hard copies of the presentation to take with us, so that we would have something to refer back to when needed.

I met many people in the four days, including someone from every province in the country (and every territory!), a few from our southern neighbours, as well as a lady from Australia, and a lady from Ireland. All had different professions from elementary school principals and those involved who have actually been diagnosed with FASD. However, everyone at that conference had the same goal in mind - to educate and raise awareness about FASD. I learned so much by conversing with each and every one of these people, it made the experience of being at a

conference of this magnitude that much more amazing.

One of the most significant lessons I came back to Vancouver with is the lesson that in order for us to make a difference in the lives of those with FASD, for us to raise awareness of the effects of alcohol intake during pregnancy, and for the implication of more programs, we must not only have the knowledge, but the wisdom too. A speaker from Australia, a woman who has two Master's degrees, an outstanding career, and who gave birth to a daughter with FASD, was speaking about the importance of both. While she emphasized both are important, she said that knowledge and wisdom are not the same that the two are very different things. "Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is fruit, but wisdom is knowing not to put it in a fruit salad." By coming together, internationally at a conference about FASD, everyone there was gaining the knowledge, and beginning to increase their wisdom.

- Pam

A STEP IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

When I started my practicum, I wasn't sure of the impact I would have on clients that use the Community Services Office. Although I was up for the challenge, I felt that 3 months wasn't long enough to make a substantial change. With my practicum wrapping up, I can honestly say that what is different is my definition of what constitutes a change in a person's life. A man named John recently accessed our office, with little direction as to the types of services he needed. He was currently homeless without any form of Identification. He was looking for a resume, a job, and more immediately, a meal. I had the opportunity to sit down with John and have him tell me a little bit about himself. I learned that John was a 51 year-old male who had lost his wife 10 years

prior and had been living on the streets on and off since that time. John had much job experience but had been out of the workforce so long, he was feeling defeated. We were able to sit down and write out some short and long term goals, such as getting him suitable housing, securing employment support and providing him with some new clothing and somewhere to go to receive a good meal. What struck me when speaking to John is that he had been homeless for such a long period of time and had never accessed services like those we were referring him too. When I asked John about this, he admitted that he had felt unworthy of those types of services and that this had been the first time he had the confidence to reach out for help. This

really made me realize the change that I had been able to facilitate that day. Although he left the office that day still homeless, and still job-less, we made a connection and have been able to work from that connection ever since. John is now living in supported housing on the downtown eastside, and works part time to top up his disability payment. We remain in contact as we wait for his Identification to arrive in the mail. I am so grateful for the opportunity to have met John, and to have helped effect such a positive change in his life. Though it seemed small that day, the impact helped him to take a step in the right direction.

- Kevin

CHOICES & CONSEQUENCES

The Choices and Consequences Program has had new life breathed into it since Jim became the program's facilitator last year. Most notably, audience numbers have jumped. For example, from 2007 to 2008, the Choices and Consequences Program spoke to 741 audience members, mostly comprised of students, teachers and parents, in 8 different locations. In March 2009 alone, Jim spoke to 1,009 audience members, in 37 different locations. By contrast Jim's audience members are a more diverse group. Not only do they include students, teachers and parents, they now include incarcerated youth, university professors, correctional staff, politicians, business leaders and members of the general public.

Jim, a fully pardoned, ex-convict, recovered alcoholic, drug addict, and former gang member, goes from school to school, talking to youth, about the perils of getting involved with youth gangs and illicit drug use. Jim believes that youth get involved in gangs because they suffer from physical or emotional abuse and neglect in the home, and that gangs provide vulnerable youth with a sense of belonging. "Kids leave their homes to go hang out somewhere, because they don't feel safe, they don't feel connected. The streets and prisons are training grounds for future gang members. Keeping kids from having

contact with the criminal justice system when they are young can go a long way to preventing victims and unnecessary violence."

Jim and the Choices and Consequences Program's newly found popularity is due to two key elements. Firstly, there has been a huge increase in the media's coverage of youth gang violence that has plagued Metro Vancouver over the last year. And secondly, Jim's presentation style is compelling. His presentations are not only filled with heart-breaking anecdotes of childhood abuse and youth gang recruitment, he leaves his audiences with a message of hope. "Not all people who were abused as children become gang members and violent criminals, but all gang members and violent people were abused as children. With proper support systems in place, change for the better is always possible. It was for me."

Jim's support for youth, who are at risk for youth gang recruitment and violence, has included rescuing a 14 year old boy from the clutches of South Vancouver gang. Jim was introduced to this youth by a school counsellor that was familiar with Jim's work at the John Howard Society. On this particular afternoon, the youth called Jim from a pay phone at a gas station after narrowly escaping a beating from a gang of violent kids. Jim instructed the youth to wait with

the gas station's staff until he could arrive there and drive him home. Jim drove the youth home and met with the youth's mother to discuss the incident involving her son. Together they formed a plan of action to help prevent another incident like this from ever happening again. The plan included, phoning the police and reporting the incident, and contacting the youth's father. The father, once notified about his son's near brush with violence, began to play a more active role in his son's life. The father learned that he needed to become more active in his son's, day-to-day life, to prevent him from being the target of youth gangs in the neighbourhood.

In addition to raising awareness about youth gang prevention, Jim also wants there to be more funding available for his program so it can expand to reach more vulnerable youth. If you would like to contribute to the Choices and Consequences Program, you can donate to the John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland c/o of the Choices and Consequences Program. All donations are tax deductible and all donors will receive a tax receipt for their contributions. "Prevention is the key. Tomorrow's gang members are sitting in today's classrooms."

- Elaine and Jim

LIVING AT TIM'S MANOR

My name is Duane. I first moved into Tims Manor on Dec. 08. I had only the clothes on my back. Today I have a small business and a safe and secure area to work. I have found my daughter, who is 17, I had not seen her in 13 years. She stays with me on Sundays. I have a comfortable home. With the assistance of Jean, I've been able to deal with my de-

pression: her encouragement has done wonders for my self-esteem. Without her and support worker Steve I would never make the endless list of medical and employment appointments. They have been kind, caring and encouraging. My home is safe and affordable which allows me to focus on connecting with my daughter. I've made great

connections in the community through John Howard Society; connections in employment, training, volunteering, and self-help groups. I would just like to thank John Howard for being my friend and helping me find my daughter.

- Duane

John Howard

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How can I help the JHSLM?

Yes, I want to

Be a Member

Make a Donation

Be a Volunteer

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

Address

Phone