

vhes



THE VICTORIA HUMAN EXCHANGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to our world, a world of
Friendship, where every
meeting of persons can be
an exchange of life's gifts -
a Human Exchange

Edition 107

Oct—Dec. 2015

A successful year and looking forward to 2016

During 2015, **Brian Smith**, Facilitator of The Father Michael J. McGivney House and **Bob Lovely**, Facilitator of Charlie Pyott House have worked with the Owner, **Ken Gibson**, to bring about some excellent upgrades and maintenance of the two Houses. Improvements to the Guidelines which must be observed by all those living in the Houses have also been instituted.



Brian has obtained individual drug tests from Verify Diagnostics in Barrie Ont. with which the men agree to be tested to ensure that no one jeopardizes the sobriety of others in the Houses by returning to substance misuse. The result of this and other measures, such as communal meals and meetings, is that the success rate in our transitional type housing is higher than in most government funded recovery Houses.

Photo at left shows Brian and Lee at June AGM, signing in and enjoying donated food.

Our thanks particularly to Brian for his generous loving service of others and his willingness to constantly go the extra mile in making things happen. Brian also serves on our grass roots Board as Treasurer and works to improve conditions for all Facilitators and Houses sponsored by our Society. He works with other Board members, notably **Lee Beauvis**, **Paola Levett** of Our Place and volunteers **Wes Mellors** (pictured below) and **Jack Moreau** (Knight of Columbus and prospective Board member) to devise new and better ways of putting the hidden pearl of our valuable work before the public, many of whom are unaware of the Human Exchange Housing Assistance Society. www.humanx.org

I am grateful to be part of the Victoria Human Exchange Society – so honored to serve on the Board of Directors and so grateful also for lasting changes in my own life –quality sobriety for many years..

To assist the VHES I have acquired a truck and trailer which will make moves and cartage less expensive. As Public Relations person for the group I want to publicize the huge need for funds and I encourage those who are comfortably off to share so that our important services of transitional-type housing for the needy can expand in 2016.

Wes Mellors



Fran Thibeau House:

This has been a very busy & successful couple of months. One fellow has moved on to bigger & better accommodations & his replacement is doing the same at the end of this month. The next fellow moved in on Nov. 1 & will likely be with us a while as he's got some health problems that his doctors are on top off with health care workers awaiting if need be. He's already looking forward to getting back to work. Scott's letter expressing gratitude is on Page 3 of this newsletter.

The other fellows, Dave W. & Richard F., are working-- Dave as a computer volunteer at the Shoal Center & Richard is working in the kitchen of a seniors' home just a block away.

I'd like to thank again our friends from **St. Vincent de Paul**, Peter, Bob, Donna, et al, for making our Thanksgiving dinner an occasion to remember cooked by our 'chef' Richard F. That was some hot, but, great homemade mustard that he whipped up for our ham. A 'ton' of fresh scallop potatoes finished us off.

Thanks as always to our attentive landlord **Aaron DeYaeger** for a new dryer and other maintenance tasks. And to past resident, **Darrell**, for many useful items.

The next job is raking the leaves, if it ever stops raining...
That's all for now in Sidney. David S..Facilitator

Judy Thomas House:

The women at this Sidney House are very grateful for all the support they receive from Churches,(Holy Trinity) Agencies,(Beacon Services) and Businesses as well as the Town of Sidney and District of Saanich. Most recently, Doug Bateman of Marks Work Wearhouse donated jogging pants for all the women; St Vincent de Paul Society helped with Thanksgiving Dinner and many other individuals gave in the form of tax deductible donations. Our good Landlords, **Jeanette and Sandy Santarelli** are quick to respond when something goes wrong and to do painting when needed..thank you both!

All of us women in the House are eager to write testimonial letters to express our gratitude for the wonderful support and safe shelter afforded by the VHES Housing program..
Please see next page and our VHES facebook.



No one is happier than our families when we are helped to straighten out our lives after years on the street.. The photo shows my mother Pat with me at the 2014 AGM. She is so grateful that I have come so far and am now helping others.

Every good wish for the Christmas Season and may the new Year be a very happy one for all our supporters.

TESTIMONIAL LETTERS

I recently had the privilege of being accepted into the transitional housing program. This opportunity came at a time when I was struggling with mental illness and recovering from a relapse with my addiction issues.

The move to this temporary home with the fellowship & support it offered was a key part in my taking control of my life back & finding my way out of a dark place. From the moment that I arrived I was made to feel welcome by the house liaison as well as the other household members.

It was but a short time before I felt like I was ready to try again; I believe that this was due to the safety & sobriety this house offered as well as the non-judgemental way in which I was treated.

All my thanks to everyone involved as I move back into life on life's terms. Could not have done it without you!!
Scott M.

As the facilitator of **Judy Thomas House** in Sidney, I would like to thank the society for where I am today. Arriving as a tenant 4 yrs ago, I was homeless, lost and struggling with addiction. I was given the chance to become close to my family again and seek out a normal and happy life that I did not have before.

Being able to become close to many of the women who have been through our house has been a great inspiration to myself and those close to me. Knowing where a lot of the ladies are coming from and the fears and struggles that they have had to deal with along the way, makes a relationship of trust and understanding an easier one for everyone.

Being given the opportunity to do this has given me more strength and encouragement than I would have received anywhere else in the time I have been here. I have had the opportunity to meet many great people who have helped through donations of items to those in need, or their time to lend a helping hand, or just a listening ear.

Knowing that there are still people out there willing to help others in need is a great feeling and being part of a society so willing to help change lives for the better is a great gift. This is a gift I have been given from the Victoria Human Exchange Society.
Many thanks,
Erin B. xoxoxo

A safe place to live is so important in recovery. At this VHES House I know I will not be exposed to drugs or alcohol—I am coming up to 10 months of sobriety and without the VHES that would be an almost impossible task. Out in the world those temptations are everywhere; but I can come home to a safe, drug-free environment.

The rooms and common areas are well maintained; weekly chores are assigned to each occupant. This bit of responsibility strengthens my transition back to the community. The outside meeting requirements (AA, NA, Church, et al) build my community network. By going to a minimum of 3 outside meetings a week, I develop stronger ties within my social framework.

Through my stay at this VHES House, I will be able to transition back into mainstream society with skills and a network of success. Without VHES I would probably be in a shelter, surrounded by people in active addiction. I am so grateful for the chance to change my lot in life.
Thank you!
Shane C.



Note that the House Shane speaks of was made possible by funds from the Knights of Columbus, notably **Paul Redchurch**—now retired. The House is named after the Knights founder: **Father Michael J. McGivney**

For other Letters please view posts on our VHES Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Victoria-Human-Exchange-Society-158522374195943/> & Web-site: www.humanx.org

SINCERE THANKS TO:

*We acknowledge the financial assistance of the Province of British Columbia,
through a Direct Access Grant.*

- **Holy Trinity Church Anglican Church Sidney** for generous annual funds –from Outreach Program.
- **The Sisters of St Ann** for invitation to apply for their funds through the Victoria Foundation.
- The **Knights of Columbus** and **Jack M.** for financial and personal gifts to the VHES Houses.
- **St Vincent de Paul Society** for gifts of many kinds; **Social Concern office** for Christmas gifts for seniors; and **Salvation Army Family Services** for toys for children.
- **District of Central Saanich** and **Town of Sidney** for inviting us to apply for funds for 2016-2017.
- **Furniture and household goods** from **M. Hall in Sidney** and **Francois B/Connie K. in Esquimalt.**
- Financial gifts from **Lois M.** and **Anonymous** (monthly donations); **Gene and Helene D.**; all who give through **Canada Helps- Mark S., Vikki M., Kathy T., Susan D., and others. Naden Military Band; Superannuates—through United Way. Provincial Employees** through designated **Community Service** funds . Our ID is **DC1077**
- Thanks to **all our generous Landlords.** Appreciation to all our **volunteer Facilitators and Board members and to all those who wrote testimonial letters.**
- **Wes M.** for public relations; **Cob's bread** delivery; acquiring truck and trailer in service of our Society.
- **Paola, Brian and Lee** for financial work. And **Robert L .and friend** for help with vehicle repairs.
- **Frank H.** for seeking funds from Saunders Subaru who have been most generous- and from the City; **Patti R** for arranging to have a band play at our Christmas Party & much behind the scenes work.
- Thanks to all who use **Thrifty Smile Cards** and so give to us through shopping. Thanks **Thrifty Foods.**

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Go to our Homepage on our web-site www.humanx.org

Cell phone - Patricia: 250-920-5056 See facilitators contact info on Home page

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And donate by using the Canada Helps button on the Home page of our Web-site.

