



*Welcome to our world--a world of friendship  
Every meeting of persons can be an exchange of life's gifts--a Human Exchange*

## Living together, in spite of differences--learn from the animals.

A baby hippopotamus that survived the tsunami waves on the Kenyan coast has formed a strong bond with a giant male century-old tortoise, in an animal facility in the port city of Mombassa, officials said.

"It is incredible. A-less-than-a-year-old hippo has adopted a male tortoise, about a century old, and the tortoise seems to be very happy with being a 'mother'," ecologist Paula Kahumbu, who is in charge of Lafarge Park, told AFP.

This is a real story that shows that *our differences don't matter much when we need the comfort of another*. We could all learn a lesson from these two creatures of God. Look beyond the differences and find a way to walk the path together.

Thank you, Anne, for sending us this story of an 'exchange of life's gifts!'

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### Re-Integration of Families Project

The men and women who come to our Houses face a variety of challenges. Often they are estranged from their children and/or families. Some parents have only a faint hope of ever being re-united in a family setting; but they may at least be helped to contact their children (if they wish) and to set up some kind of distant relationship (mail/phone or email) until such time as the child is old enough to seek the parent out. Others have more immediate plans for having their children with them again.

As we build the model of care around the needs of the individual, no one answer will serve everyone's needs. Perhaps one will need help to locate family; another to negotiate with MCFD to arrange visits; another to increase skills and/or obtain supports to maintain sobriety. We will work with many agencies in providing these supports and training opportunities.

**The Leon and Thea Koerner Foundation** has been approached for a multi-year grant to assist us in this task of re-integrating families. We are grateful for their earlier help. Any individuals who would like to send a financial gift for this program, please send to

**VHES, Box 8534 Victoria BC V8W 3S1. For further information: 361-2762**



## SIDNEY HOUSES

Frances Thibeau and Judy Thomas Houses are always full these days. It's time to do our Report to the *Town of Sidney* to whom we are grateful for financial assistance for this local Sidney resource.

Thanks also to *Sidney Super Foods* for more food donations! And gratitude to Anna and Derrick for their capable facilitation of the Houses.

A senior from the Gulf Islands stayed a few days in the women's house. She commented: "*Nobody normal is as non-functional as I have been; I was at the end of my tether. Three days was just what I needed to catch up on 'most' "*

Thanks to all supporters of these two Houses and to the generous Owners.

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### LINDA JIM HOUSE-Victoria

The best definition of "Emergency short-term housing" is simply the word "Change"! Since assuming a VHES Board position and with it the "care and feeding" of Linda Jim House, change has been constant. An excellent change is the arrival of Isobel, the new House Facilitator. Isobel brings with her a wealth of knowledge, life experience, an innate understanding of the difficulties and roadblocks that most of the women who come to us arrive with. She also brings her First Nations heritage and culture with her, having just completed an annual journey by canoe which is both a physical and spiritual challenge.

Occupants continue to come and go. We have just completed a real "spring cleanup" of the home, leaving it sparkling like new. We are ever mindful of the generosity and kindness of the landlords who rent/lease these homes to us, and we make every effort to care for them as if they were our own homes. The never-ending search for additional Volunteers and Board Members continues. The need is so great, and at the moment I'm very thankful for Yvette, who came to help us at LJH from her home on Mayne Island.

So much of the work of keeping up the administration of the houses and Linda Jim House is done by those of us with computers and enough know-how to use email. Sadly, my last laptop gave up the ghost and was given a good christian burial - but almost immediately a kind-hearted gentleman from Sidney donated another laptop and I am back online typing away. God does provide for our needs JUST when we need it most! And typing away means as best I can with pretty much one arm still - that broken arm of mine is healing, slowly but surely, but it does still put a crimp in my ability to type as much or as fast as I'm used to.

September will see LJH full -- 5 occupants. And as the work of this house continues, I, and all of us who work to keep these houses running, continue to be grateful to all of you who assist us in so many ways; we thank God for each and every one of you!!

Joan V.

[jvez@shaw.ca](mailto:jvez@shaw.ca)

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The **Association for Consumer Empowerment (ACE)** is circulating a Petition to get help for the people who are *homeless, mentally ill and addicted, and also for those with Psychiatric and Concurrent disabilities that are living below poverty level*. During the transition and the closing down of mental institutions (such as Riverview Hospital that provided intensive therapy and housing), services to the mentally ill have been diluted.

The Federal and Provincial governments have not handed down money to the communities to open adequate, accessible community care services. When a society abandons those who are less fortunate and very sick it is no better than a third world nation.

Download the Kirby Senate Report: *Out of the Shadows at Last*. *If you agree with the recommendations, write to the federal government.*

To sign or get copies of the petition, contact Isabel Clark at ACE: at [acebc45@hotmail.com](mailto:acebc45@hotmail.com) or [grandmas@saltspring.com](mailto:grandmas@saltspring.com) or page: 361-2762 in Victoria. 1-800-691-9366 from Salt Spring Island.

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### HOPE HOUSE-Victoria

At Hope House, Sunday has become 'dinner night.' Three of four ladies are doing the Elements program through PEERS. All are supporting one another to move forward with their lives. One occupant, a mother of two young children, as been with us now 4 months. She continues to move in a positive direction towards having her children live with her once again. She is able to work on herself and visit her children every weekend. Hope House is all about possibilities - and what can be, not what might have been. Thank you to our landlords Rick and Pam for upgrading the kitchen with beautiful new cabinets and a soft, warm new paint color. Thank you to Hill House for referring our new occupants. We must all work together for a happy ending and new beginning. Connie

It is easy for those who live comfortable lives in Victoria and the Gulf Islands to forget that there are many homeless people who reside on the fringes of these prosperous communities. Indeed, a community development expert and leader once said that *the true measure of community is the extent to which it recognizes, honors, embraces, and shares the gifts offered by those less fortunate.*

I offer my un-wavering support to all the endeavors undertaken by The Victoria Human Exchange Society to carry on its work in exchanging human gifts of compassion, love and support to those in most need. In my view they represent what "community" is all about.

Sincerely,

Jim Lauder, BSW, MA, sfo

**A new web site** intended to record stories & facilitate dialogue between persons experiencing homelessness  
[www.homelessnation.org/](http://www.homelessnation.org/)

41% of food bank users in 2005 were children. Canada's high rate of child poverty is shocking for a country ranked among the wealthiest in the world. Canada ranks bronze on childhood poverty, with a rate almost six times that of Denmark!  
*The conference Board of Canada. 2005.*

"...while all children are born equal, they don't all have the same opportunities to flourish. This is as true for children here as it is for children in the third world...Nothing in today's society is more disgraceful than the marginalization of some young people who are driven to isolation and despair. We must not tolerate such disparities."  
Her excellency the Right Honourable Michaelle Jean, Governor General



### My Handprints

Sometimes you get discouraged  
Because I am so small  
And always leave my fingerprints  
On furniture and walls  
But every day I'm growing big  
And soon I'll be very tall  
Then all my little handprints  
Will be hard to recall  
So here's a special handprint  
Just so that you can say  
This is how my fingers looked  
When I placed them here today.

*From the Early Infant Development program*

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### Humour Corner

*That's Life.....*

On the first day, God created the dog and said:  
"Sit all day by the door of your house and bark at anyone who comes in or walks past. For this, I will give you a life span of twenty years."  
The dog said:  
"That's a long time to be barking. How about

only ten years? I'll give you back the other ten"  
So God agreed.

On the second day, God created the monkey and said:  
"Entertain people, do tricks, make them laugh. For this, I'll give you a twenty-year life span."  
The monkey said:  
"Monkey tricks for twenty years? That's a long time to perform. How about I give you back ten like the dog?"  
And God agreed.

On the third day, God created the cow and said:  
"You must go into the field with the farmer all day long and suffer under the sun, have calves and give milk to support the farmer's family. For this, I will give you a life span of sixty years."  
The cow said:  
"That's a tough life you for sixty years. How about twenty and I'll give back the other forty?"  
And God agreed again.

On the fourth day, God created man and said:  
"Eat, sleep, play, marry and enjoy your life. For this, I'll give you twenty years."  
But man said:  
"Only twenty years? Could you possibly give me my twenty, the forty the cow gave back, the ten the monkey gave back, and the ten the dog gave back. That makes eighty, okay?"  
"Okay," said God, "You asked for it."

So that is why the first twenty years we eat, sleep, play and enjoy ourselves. For the next forty years we slave in the sun to support our family. For the next ten years we do monkey tricks to entertain the grandchildren. And for the last ten years we sit on the front porch and bark at everyone.  
Life has now been explained to you.

*Author Unknown*

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### Poetry Corner

#### **Silent Books**

Silent books  
Speak clearly  
When they speak  
They mean it.  
They speak to  
Listeners  
Who hear a different drum  
Far away.

*From Gillian Shirreff's new book "When I met Jesus and the Crows" available from West Coast Literary Productions:  
[www.wclpproductions.com](http://www.wclpproductions.com) 386-6690.*

Other publications : "While I was out"-- Living with mental illness and alcoholism. Newsletter: *Tranquillity*. News about good mental health.

## EXCHANGE OF GIFTS

### *Sincere Thanks To:*

- **Mayor Don Amos** and the **Town of Sidney** for supporting our two Houses in that area.
- **The Knights of Columbus**, Saanich Peninsula for further funds for the Fr. Michael J. McGivney House in Victoria and for the two Sidney Houses.
- **Sean and Jay** for all your contributions to Fran Thibeau House. Blessings on your future as you now move on to independence.
- **Arthur M.** for generous donation of a laptop computer to Joan when hers expired. This gift enabled Joan to keep up her invaluable work for the Society.
- All the occupants of the Sidney Houses, particularly the Facilitators, **Anna** and **Derrick**, for making sure Houses and grounds are maintained so well and for taking care of new occupants
- **Jim and Doreen D.** for 600 sq. feet of carpet and for men's clothes for Frances Thibeau House. *We apologize for the error in calling Doreen - Terry, in our last newsletter.*
- **The Koerner Foundation** for accepting our application for a multi-year grant to support single parents in our Houses who are endeavouring to re-integrate with their families.
- **The Provincial Employees Community Services Fund** for inviting us to their Annual Fundraising Kick-Off at Government House and for continued support for our work. Thanks Joan V. and Kay B. for representing us on this important occasion.
- **The Sisters of St. Ann** through Sr. Frieda for encouragement, possibility of more funds from the **Esther's Dream Foundation**, and many wonderful items of furniture and household goods, including a wardrobe, dresser, radios and sewing machine.
- Financial gifts also from **Elizabeth and Rex P.B.; Joan S.; Mary B.; Margaret B.** *See also Gulf Islands news, enclosed.*
- Monthly \$ Donations: **Mark S.; Lois M.; Pat L.; and Margaret B.** on SSI.
- **Joan, Connie, Don, Sheila; Karen** and all their helpers for keeping the five Victoria Houses going.
- **Judy A.** for hanging in there while we look for another Treasurer
- Those who have offered to become volunteers and possibly Board members of our grassroots Society: **Kay B, Marion S. and Karen H.**
- **Don W.** for helping Judy with cartage of goods and for taking care of the men's Houses in Victoria.
- **Karen** for assisting with **Esther's House** and with donations from the **Mustard Seed.**
- **Sheila** for all her contributions to Esther's House. We wish you every blessing as you set out on your own, **Sheila.**
- **Margaret W.** who is always collecting gifts for our Society from the kind folk in her building.
- **Marj & Dave L.** for again donating envelopes and time updating contact lists and printing envelopes.
- **Pacificcoast.net** and **Victoria Free Net** for generous service.
- All those whose names we have missed but who have shared gifts with the people in the Houses, we thank you!. **All our Landlords and their Maintenance persons.**

TOP CEO Annual Income (2004) \$173,192,788  
Single Person on Welfare Annual Income \$6,120  
Ratio: \$28,299 : \$1

***DONATIONS*** to support the ***Victoria Human Exchange Society*** may be sent to

**Box 8534 - Victoria BC - V8W 3S1**

Pager numbers **GREATER VICTORIA** : 418-9997 or **361-2762** for ***Sidney and Gulf Islands***

*From Gulf Islands and from anywhere else in North America: 1-800-691-9366*