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*The Victoria  
Human Exchange  
Society*

Edition 77  
2008

April -June

Thank you to all our family of friends who celebrated our 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebration and Annual General Meeting in Fernwood on June 7th! The year behind us has been a really challenging year and we are facing change, transition and the need for more active volunteers to share life's gifts, especially *capable facilitators for our houses*.

We are really appealing this year for people willing to take on this responsibility either by living in or through visits to the houses and being on-call. The requirements for a live-in facilitator are below:

### **Facilitator**

**OBJECTIVE:** To be an anchor person in the House who liaises with VHES Board.

**Ideal Pre-requisites:**

1. To be free from drug and alcohol misuse for at least 1 year; and bondable.
2. To model good hygiene and housekeeping skills.
3. To have good communication skills; ideally-- knowledge of conflict resolution.

**Note:** A candidate for this service may have a job and does not have to leave after 3 months. Facilitators may carry out this role for as long as they and the VHES Board agree.

*The Facilitator pays \$325.00 rent (other occupants \$375.00) , but is guaranteed a more permanent home in exchange for his/her services to the good of the House.*

**Duties:**

1. To be present for intake of new occupants; to introduce the new person to the Household and help them settle in. To hold the keys for the rooms.
2. To make sure that the Guidelines are displayed and followed.
3. *To report serious Guideline infringements to a member of the Board immediately*
4. To model good housecleaning skills to and oversee the house chores.
5. To make sure that smoke detectors are operational; fire extinguishers charged and handy.
6. To notify the designated Board member if repairs involving Landlord are needed.
7. To hold petty cash for use in approved purchases for the House.
8. To hold a receipt book for use when collecting rents--if asked to do so.

*Every Meeting of Persons can be an Exchange of Life's Gifts--a Human Exchange*

**Note** that service of this kind is good work experience.

## HOUSE REPORTS

With summer comes the constant task of grass cutting and yard work. Thanks to Deborah, our yard has never looked better. She has done a major job of edging all the walkways, front and back, trimming trees and shrubs, and completely redoing a weedy bed on the side of the house to create a lovely little rock garden. Our neighbours helped in giving us a ground cover sheet and providing the rocks - as well as lending us the lawn mower on frequent occasions. We are looking for an electric mower if anyone has a good one to donate.

Everyone has been quite busy - Deborah continues to save for her move to permanent housing; our newest resident is an artist, just with us for a short time; and I continue to move forward with work responsibilities. We have one vacancy at present which will probably be filled by the time this goes to print. Sandy our landlord completed maintenance tasks for us including replacing upstairs toilet, sink taps and shower head. We are so appreciative of the care and attention provided by Sandy and Jeanette and always look forward to their visits.

No doubt change will continue. And of course donations are always coming in the form of clothing and foodstuffs, for which we are truly grateful. The community is generous in its response to us, especially local churches. We wish everyone a happy summer.

Anna, Facilitator, **Judy Thomas House**, Sidney

**On the move....**we have said "goodbye"; and, "best of luck" to a couple of the gals that had been in **Esthers house**. At the moment, we are having to get in touch with our landlords for some necessary repairs to the inside; and, then we will be interviewing possible residents to fill the house once again. In the meantime, the ladies have been getting dirt under their fingernails working in the yard. The front garden area has been cleaned up, pruned down; and, planted; so, when the flowers pop up - should be a pretty sight. Thanks to my "green thumbs" over there.

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**What can we say?** Everytime I write the newsletter for "**Ediths**"...I think I am going to be able to tell you that we are all moved in, organized; and, good to go... *BUT*, such is not the case! We very nicely tucked, stored and packed everything (from the downstairs) all around the upstairs to allow for the construction of our fifth bedroom down. Unfortunately, we ran into a couple of lengthy delays; and, the room is not finished yet; so, the gals will be living in a somewhat chaotic house for a little longer. Fortunately, our 3 residents; (and our soon-to-move-in new resident), are all pretty easy going though; so, things are fine. We are really looking forward to the day that the room is finished and ready for occupancy though; and, then a re-organization of the upper level will make for a very comfy home.

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**Close to town....**is what is working the best for the gals in **Linda Jims**. We have a good bunch of ladies there; and, all are happy they are located close to town as they are all active with school, programs; and, part-time work. Diane, Cheryl, Manon, Janet & Bernice have a friendly, cooperative relationship (and, Bernice has turned out some mighty fine home cooked meals too). Bernice was only with us a short time, when her son sent her a ticket to visit him in Holland. We were as excited for her as she was...she hadn't seen her son in years; so, was anxious to make the trip. While Bernice has been in Holland, a friend of hers (Jennifer), needed a place to stay for a while. Bernice very generously said that she could stay in her room (rent was paid for the month; and, the room would have been empty). Jennifer has since moved on; and, thanked both Bernice and the VHES for having had the opportunity of a place to stay during this short period between residences.

## HOUSE REPORTS ~ cont.

All is well at the **Frances Thibeau House** in Sidney; we are at near capacity with three fellows living in happy harmony together. We are deeply grateful for the help and support extended to us from the **Knights of Columbus through their Garage Sale at St. Elizabeth's** and the **St. Vincent de Paul Society** and we thank them for their continued generosity.

George, David, & Martin, **Frances Thibeau House Sidney**

The house is full with all the occupants being very grateful to **the Knights of Columbus** for ongoing funding. We are all doing our best to support one another and Don supplies moral and practical support as his busy job at Our Place allows. He did some maintenance for us the other day. We also benefit from a **St Vincent de Paul Society** voucher which pays for needed house supplies. Thanks also to the Mustard Seed for supplying food to those in the house who need it.

I would like to serve on the VHES Board this coming year, representing the needs of the men at this house.

Jeremy Garner, Facilitator, **Father Michael J. McGivney House, Victoria**

### **Charlie Pyott House report:**

All is running smoothly at this house with a new occupant being interviewed tomorrow. The house will then be full again. All men are working on their AA/NA program and getting stronger every day. The monthly **St Vincent de Paul** voucher enables us to buy supplies and have enough left over for a roast for everyone--quite a treat! The neighbours are very friendly being willing to loan us a ladder or other item needed from time to time. Thanks everyone for the opportunity to live in dignified housing until we get on our feet; I have done my best to make a difference but I may have to move on myself in a few months--I wish the house and its occupants well.

Gordon Phillips, Facilitator, **Charlie Pyott House**

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**THINGS WE WOULD BE GLAD TO RECEIVE:** *An electric lawn mower for Judy Thomas House; Solid chests of drawers for several houses; FAX machine for Edith Gulland House. Any donations of supplies or funds to keep the houses in operation. Page: 361-2762 or phone: 920-5056*

**Many thanks to Shannon Drew-Burrows for posting our needs on the Victoria Foundation Web-site – Designated Donations page**

Homeless in Victoria from Patrick Sehnerch's blog site: [www.schnerchpj.com](http://www.schnerchpj.com)

The plan to house and support 1,550 homeless people in Victoria, B.C. is a commendable plan. The most important issue is to have them fast tracked and placed into homes as fast as possible. Not only do they benefit from having a place of their own, it also reduces the concentration of homeless people in the downtown core. There is no prerequisite to be free of drugs or alcohol to be placed in a home. This is the new age of dealing with mental illness, addiction and homelessness. Read more at blog site

**Sincere thanks to:**

**The Town of Sidney** for annual Grant to help sustain the 2 Sidney Houses.

**The Victoria Foundation** for funds without which we could not support our occupants so well.

**Knights of Columbus** for inviting us to take items from the Garage Sale at St. Elizabeth's and **George and friends** for carting the donations to Fran Thibeau House.

**PECSF, long-time supporters-** for invitation to apply for funding for the new financial year.

**KAIROS** for contribution towards our proposed new men's house in Victoria.

**Father Joe K. of Comox** for further donations left at Esther's House by kind friend of Father's.

**The St. Vincent de Paul Conferences**, for monthly vouchers for each of our houses. Also for helping to get a fifth room finished at Edith Gulland House with a donation from the **Oddfellows**.

**Students from Camosun College** for volunteer work to finish the fifth room at Edith Gulland House.

**Provincial Employees Community Services Fund** for inviting us to submit an application for further funding in the coming year. Regular donations are made to the Fund from the pay packages of PECSF members.

**The Sisters of St. Ann** for continued encouragement and support for Esther's House. Congratulations to the Sisters on their 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.

**All those who use the Smile Cards** for obtaining a monthly dividend for the Society. Thanks to **Thrifty Foods** for inviting us to apply for further assistance.

**Mustard Seed** for continued deliveries which are divided amongst the 3 women's Houses.

**Financial Gifts: Patrick L., Mark S. and Lois M.** for monthly post dated cheques; **the Oddfellows through St V. de Paul; Knights of Columbus Councils** for further regular funding to the **Father Michael J. McGivney House** in Victoria.

**Cobs Bread--** bread and baked goods. **Don W. and other willing volunteers** for pick up and drop off

**Beacon Community Services** for a monthly food box (fruits and veggies). **The Sidney Lions Club Food Bank** for all the support to our Sidney residents.

**Elizabeth of Bowerbank** for more bags of crocheted items such as afghans, knee blankets and other items.

**Marilyn G.** for publishing our newsletter and saving us postage through email delivery. And for many beautiful and warm afghan blankets.

**J. Pendril B** for gift of 2 chaise lounges picked up and delivered by **Catherine C.** to Edith Gulland House.

**All the Occupants of the Houses** for looking after houses and grounds so well. All our good Owners for keeping the Houses well maintained.

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

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

**Pager # GREATER VICTORIA : 361-2762 Cell phone: 920-5056 FAX: 656-6242**

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

**Web-site: www.humanx.org**