



# THE VICTORIA HUMAN EXCHANGE SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Edition 79

October -- December 2008

## A Time of Growth and BIG Challenges

**“Ask and you will receive” has become a very meaningful scriptural quote for VHES!**

In the past two months, no less than 4 suitable houses/duplexes have been offered to the VHES by Owners sympathetic to the plight of fellow human beings in need of housing.

In one case, the developers of the Mt St. Angela property -- with the blessing of the Sisters of St Ann, who have partnered with us for years-- have offered us two large houses on the development site to lease for 2 years.

We are presently working with all parties to raise the necessary funds to furnish and set up these houses with an opening date of November 1<sup>st</sup>.

If you know of any mature low-income women who work or study in the downtown or need to be in the Victoria area for medical reasons, please contact **Linda** at the Victoria pager: **250-361-2762/ her cell: 250-857-3905 or home: 250-658-0170. Linda's email is: [mzmayo@yahoo.ca](mailto:mzmayo@yahoo.ca)** From **outside Victoria: 1-800-691-9366** or Patricia at **250-920-5056**.

**If you are able to help financially or with furniture and supplies to set up these unfurnished houses, please also phone the above numbers.**

In the second instance, a large house and a half duplex have been offered by an Owner sympathetic to the plight of homeless males. Though we are prepared to take on one house, a second will not be easy to undertake—though it will be easy to fill with males in need of transitional housing.

Again we appeal to any individuals and groups who can assist the Victoria Human

Exchange Society with the task of opening one and possibly two new homes for men in November. The first would be named **Ken Barnett House** in honour of the VHES Founding Director who wrote our Constitution and was our first Treasurer and fundraiser. And it has been suggested that the second Home be named in honour of the United Church Minister who was also a VHES Founding Director and was founder of the original Open Door on Quadra St—**Lawrence Moon**.

If you can help with furnishings, supplies or with much need cash donations, please contact Don Williams at 889-2836 or the society pager, 361-2762. You can also reach Don by email:

[oldguy46@shaw.ca](mailto:oldguy46@shaw.ca)



## Christmas wish List

Store Gift cards  
Phone Cards  
Turkeys for each House  
Gifts for males and females  
Gifts for children  
Christmas decorations  
Toiletries for males and females  
Christmas candies/cookies  
Wrapping paper or bags/ties

The Human Exchange will be sponsoring 12 houses this Christmas so we need all the help you can give us!!

May we take this opportunity to wish each one of our friends and supporters, especially those who volunteer most constantly, the blessings of this Season of Light!

## VHES Newsletter Special Edition

**A book about how mental illness, addiction and homelessness is being released in December 2008.**

**VHES supports the author, Patrick J. Schnerch. Included in this edition is an additional insert with information about this project. We ask you to post this copy in your office, residence or meeting halls.**

**All 1st year profits will be donated to VHES. Stay tuned to the radio, city newspaper and your community paper for more details.**

## HOUSE REPORTS



Mary Gordon

Pictured with her book: *Life is a Blend*

Mary is a Founding member of the Human Exchange; her generous sharing of gifts over the years extends from sharing the newsletter to sharing her home with others. Her son Christopher, who died recently, located the house in Vic. West that we called after Charlie Pyott. We now have a house that formerly belonged to the Sisters of St Ann that is in need of a name. We would like to honour Mary and her family by naming it Mary Gordon House. To support this new House in Victoria, please send donations to our Box number, marked: *Mary Gordon House*.

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### Tribute to Niel

"My friend, Niel died of suicide Aug 31. In his final note he said he hoped his survivors would do something to support those suffering from mental illness. Here is a poem I wrote for Niel and his family...Denise and Chris. Love, g..

"With brushes of Angel's hair  
I paint large drops of blood,  
Mixed with a touch of green and,  
Crosses on a graveyard  
Blue crosses, yellow grass,  
Purple sky, There's a small Parish  
In the background. I believe, I believe  
For a great reunion in the sky.  
Delicate birds line the  
Vermillion horizon. Hot kisses,  
Painted with squirrel's hair  
Say good bye, wondering,  
Where oh where is the reunion?"

"In Niel's final note to us he asked us to open the door to mental illness in any way we could. Thanks and love from his family"

**In an emergency, call  
the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline  
1-800-273-TALK**

Our **Edith Gulland house** has become the pivotal house while we are in transition to the new Esther's on the Mt. St. Angela property. The residents at Edith's are getting quite used to the house being a beehive of activity as we amalgamate and collect the necessary furniture, housewares and items needed to open our two new women's houses in downtown Victoria. Our landlords (Gord & Barb) at Edith's house are understanding of the work we do; and, have been very helpful to us. Gord has mowed our lawn, trimmed our bushes, watered the hedges; and, they have said they will cut back our overgrown garden and re-seed it for us. Barb came over one day, to bring us a bunch of plums from their fruit trees; and, said that if they can help in anyway, or haul anything away for us in their truck, to give them a call. Edith's may look like a giant storage locker right now; but, once we get the new women's houses up and running - we can reorganize at Edith's and make it the warm and welcome home it is meant to be. We look forward to bringing new residents into Edith's; and, the downstairs bedroom (that was constructed this year with the very generous donations of materials and labour) will provide nice accommodation for one or two more women.

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**Linda Jim house** has recently had quite a turnover in residents. One resident has acquired an assisted living apartment which will help her tremendously with her physical disabilities/ another has moved to the Nanaimo area and started work as a security guard/ one gal was with us for a month while she completed a contract job in Victoria and has since returned to Vancouver/ one of our remaining residents is in her third month of pregnancy and hopes to be reunited with her husband in Vancouver as soon as he is able to secure a fulltime job & affordable housing/ the other resident still with us is number one on the BC Housing list for assisted living and waiting for the phone call that they have an apartment for her. The house itself could use some updating and the carpets done. A fresh coat of paint would work wonders with the light coloured carpets cleaned. We have had a lot of items hauled away from Linda Jim's and the yard cleaned up. This has been a bit of an ongoing job, as for some reason, people think dropping off items (for our use??) in the yard is okay. Although we do appreciate donations - we would like to know who is leaving them; and, whether or not they would be of use to us. We recently had two car top carrier lids tossed over the fence into the front yard, two bags of used (& dirty clothes) left by the fence, a few other items that unfortunately were of no use; and, it cost us money to have them hauled away. On the other hand - our garden bench that was in our front yard went missing in the middle of the night; so, I hope whoever took it enjoys it as much as our Linda Jim house residents used too.

We are presently looking for dressers/ book shelves/ vcr's or dvd players for Linda Jim's; and, of course - laundry soap/ dish soap/ cleaning products/ paper products are **always welcome donations**; and, always needed.

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**As this is our last newsletter for 2008, we would like to  
thanks all our donors and wish you all the Joy and  
Peace in the Season of Light!**

## HOUSE REPORTS cont.

It is with a lot of excitement; and a tinge of sadness, that I write about **Esther's house** for this newsletter. The sadness comes as we make our arrangements to move from this location. We have been here for seven years; and, in that time - countless women have 'come to' and 'gone from' Esther's. Lots of cheers, tears, laughter (sometimes a little angst) has resonated thruout the house; and, it is comforting to know that we have been able to assist so many women, at our old location, with taking positive steps in rebuilding their lives. At this time, I would like to thank our previous landlords (Eric & Andrew) for being sympathetic to our cause and allowing us to rent the house; and provide accommodation to so many women in need. I would also like to thank our past facilitators; and, in particular Judy (who just happens to be our long-term volunteer treasurer as well) for their time, understanding, patience and generosity towards the women of Esthers. We have an opportunity of gaining a bigger house to carry on our work; and, as always - with the loyal and benevolent help of the Sisters of St. Ann - we look forward to moving into and re-establishing Esther's as our pivotal house for women. Our new home will accommodate six women in need (as opposed to 4 in our old location); and the home is in "move in" condition. We thank all of our volunteers; and, the generosity of our donors to the *old* Esther's location; and, ask that you remain with us during our transition to the *new* Esther's. More than ever now, we need your assistance while we get re-established. We are in need of furnishings, housewares, etc. for the new house OR if you want to help but not sure how - you can with gift cards from Wal-Mart, Canadian Tire, Home Hardware, (pretty much any store that has gift cards available). We **welcome donations** (monetary/ gift cards/ or otherwise); and, a call to Linda @ (250) 658-0170 or the VHES pager @ (250) 361-2762 or 1-800-691-9366 (out of town toll-free) would be most appreciated. We look forward to telling you all about the **new Esthers house** in our next newsletter; so, stay tuned!

**HUMOUR CORNER:** A photographer on vacation was inside a church taking photographs when he noticed a golden telephone mounted on the wall with a sign that read, '\$10,000 per call.'

The American, being intrigued, asked a priest who was strolling by what the telephone was used for.

The priest replied that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 you could talk to God. The American thanked the priest and went along his way.

Next stop was Atlanta. There, at a very large cathedral, he saw the same golden telephone with the same sign under it.

He wondered if this was the same kind of telephone he saw in Orlando and he asked a nearby nun what its purpose was.

She told him that it was a direct line to heaven and that for \$10,000 he could talk to God.

'O.K., thank you,' said the American.

He then traveled to Indianapolis, Washington DC, Philadelphia, Boston and New York. In every church he visited he saw the same golden telephone with the same '\$10,000 per call' sign under it.

The American, upon leaving Vermont decided to travel up to Canada to see if Canadians had the same phone.

He arrived in Canada, and in the first church he entered, there was the same golden telephone, but this time the sign under it read, '40 cents per call.'

Dumbfounded, the American asked the priest about the sign. 'Father, I've traveled all over America and I've seen this same golden telephone in many churches. I'm told that it is a direct line to heaven, but in the US, the price was \$10,000 per call. So why is it so cheap here?'

The priest smiled and answered, 'You're in Canada now son -- it's a local call.'

Author Unknown

**Sincere thanks to:**

**Financial Gifts:** **Esther's Dream Foundation and the Sisters of St Ann** for continuing to partner with us and for blessing us with further annual funding for *Esther's House*. See story on Page 1. **The Victoria Foundation** for generous funds to set up houses and for clients' needs. **John T.; Sid. T.; R. Pendril B.; Norm I.** and the **Real Estate Board** for assisting with Insurance on two new houses. **Patrick L., Mark S. and Lois M.** for monthly post dated cheques.

**Patrick S.** for offering to partner with the VHES on his series of Books on housing the 'hard-to-house in the City of Gardens. Thanks **Rhoda, Derrick and Maureen** for working with Patrick on this project. (See Insert)

**Catherine C.** for bringing us the sanders and for again agreeing to request children's gifts for Christmas from *Salvation Army Family Services*.

**R. Pendril B.** for two hand sanders—a wonderful gift to people in our houses.

**Deborah** for organizing a clean up at Judy Thomas House and George for the same at Frances Thibeau House.

**Derrick** for delighting Gillian on her birthday with CD's of classic music and bird songs!

**The St. Vincent de Paul Conferences**, continuing monthly vouchers for each of our houses and for helping with furniture and cartage for our new houses.

**Jen** and a women's group from **Friendship Baptist Church** who offered to help out if there are any events/specific dates that require a number of people.

**Thrifty Foods** and all those who use the **Smile Cards** for the monthly dividend for the Society.

**Blankets for Canada** and **Marilyn G.** for all the beautiful blankets for the Houses and for gifts.

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

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

All our **Facilitators and occupants** for taking good care of the Houses.

**Our good Landlords** for their patience and support for our society and all the many occupants. Special thanks to the Sidney Owners for recent work at the houses. **DONATIONS** to support the **Victoria Human Exchange Society** may be sent to

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

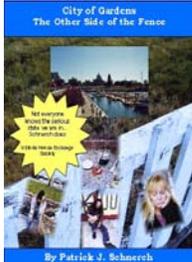
**Pager # GREATER VICTORIA : 361-2762      Cell phone: 920-5056      FAX: 656-6242**

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

Web-site: [www.humanx.org](http://www.humanx.org)

*City of Gardens*  
*The Other Side of the Fence*  
Special Introductory Offer!

The 'City of Gardens: The Other Side of the Fence' describes how mental illness, addiction and homelessness affects Victoria, B.C. Canada and what the city is doing to eradicate these conditions.



This is the 1<sup>st</sup> edition out of the series, 'The City of Gardens Collection.' There are five books in total, one for each year coinciding with the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness.

All 1<sup>st</sup> year profits from each book in the series will be donated to the, Victoria Human Exchange Society. The book will retail for \$25.00 with free shipping and handling to those who take advantage of the introductory offer. You may reserve your copy for the advance printing prior to the official release in late spring of 2009.

You may send your cheque or money order to:

West Coast Literary Productions  
3108 Earl Grey Street  
Victoria, B.B. V9A 1W9  
Canada

Order by phone:  
250-386-6690  
Or toll free at:  
1-888-626-1229

We accept:  
Visa/MasterCard/American Express

The advance printing will be shipped out at least two weeks prior to book release. These orders do not have to pay shipping and handling, this is a special introductory offer direct from the author.



VHES is stepping out of the norm. We were approached by one of our members about a fundraising campaign to help VHES in its fight against homelessness.

Patrick Schnerch suggested collaboration between him and VHES. He offered to donate the first year profits of the book to this organization for exchange of support.

We will see how this works in 2009; if successful there may be further collaboration for the next four books in the series.

Victoria Human Exchange Society  
Fundraiser Extravaganza!

We have embarked on a massive fundraising campaign. West Coast Literary Productions has committed the 1<sup>st</sup> year's profits of each book in the series to be donated to VHES.



We will keep you informed of our mini events that will feature the, 'City of Gardens: The Other Side of the Fence.'

There will be things like organizing a Book Launch for the author, Patrick J. Schnerch in the spring of 2009. The exact dates will be finalized in the coming months.

The Book Launch is by invitation only. If you would like to attend, phone; 250-386-6690 and reserve your seat. If you want a book, you will have to reserve in advance. This prevents shortages and the excess moving of boxes.

Schnerch will give a presentation to the audience about the book and the present situation about homelessness in Victoria. There will be a scheduled book signing afterwards. Refreshments will be available.

There will be other events throughout the year, such as a summer barbeque, presentations, book reading and signings plus much more.

VHES is committed to the community in the fight against homelessness. Schnerch shares this commitment as we do. We want to thank-you for your continuing support of VHES in those efforts.

## About The Author

Patrick J. Schnerch is an advocate for the mentally ill and addicted which is also in close relations with homelessness. He does this through the power of the pen with his literature. This is his third book published.

Schnerch wrote his first book in 2003 titled, 'ADRIAN.' This book was written while the author was suffering psychosis and alcoholism. The book was never edited and is the rawest publication that you have ever read.

In 2006, he published a memoir about his life living with mental illness and addiction which was still a problem when he wrote it. 'The Peaceful Warrior: Memoirs of a Damaged Mind and Soul' is a brutally personal and honest account of his battles with these conditions.

Presently, he has been sober for two years and his mental illness is now controlled. He has embarked of a five book series titled, 'The City of Gardens Collection.' This book is the premiere edition mirroring progress of the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness. In 2008, he volunteered his services to VHES. Schnerch is a director on the board.