

Heart to Heart

A NEWSLETTER BY ISLAND CRISIS CARE SOCIETY

HOW DO YOU HEAL A HEART - STORY

NEWCASTLE ART SHOW

THANKS TO OUR DONORS

CNOY 2023

VOLUNTEER WEEK

LIFESKILLS PROGRAM

PROJECT RISE



HOW DO YOU HEAL A HEART?

It is a question that has been at the forefront for Sue Fichtler, member of the support team at Orca Place Supportive Housing program throughout the past few months after the untimely loss of her son Evan.

It is the kind of thing that can break a mother, and yet, months later, Sue is using her pain and her passion, and the powerful legacy of her son, to make a difference in her community – leveraging hope for other people in need and in pain.

It is, she says, because of Evan himself.

Eldest of her three children, Evan had been on the road towards making a big impact in the community. After years of struggling with substance use, Evan was in recovery and finding his place and his voice as a support worker, helping others who face challenges with substance use. Driven by his own experiences and painful past, Evan was moving forward in hope – and committed to bringing healing and help to others. As the family wrote in his obituary, “He was fiercely committed to helping the homeless and anyone that struggled.”

For the last year of his life, Evan had studied and worked as a support worker, investing his energy and his passion for others towards making a difference.

It was a road hard won.

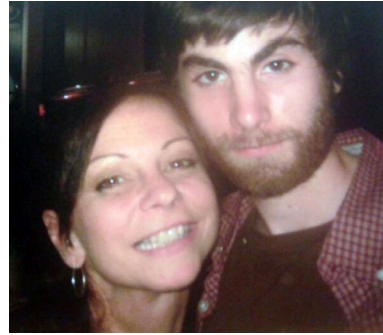
“Evan detoxed at our house November 2021. And he just really wanted to get his life back. And then he immediately started working at the VIP, which was a shelter, and became supportive housing, at the same time getting his peer support certificate and then his support worker certificate,” Sue relates. He cared about people and was driven to use his own pain to help others – and he believed in people.

“The potential that he had is the potential of everybody out there that we’re trying to help, to lend a helping hand. So many people spoke, have spoken to me since, about his compassion and his kindness, and those are like little gems. You get these little nuggets that’s beautiful, beautiful stories of different people’s experiences and the way he helped them.”

Yet this potential was cut short last Remembrance Day, when he fell victim to a fire in his small apartment. The fire didn’t spread, but Evan had recently relapsed and never woke up and therefore succumbed to smoke inhalation in his bedroom.

The last few months have been hard for Sue, yet much like her son, she is determined to not let her experiences be in vain. Instead, she has chosen to act, and to try and continue Evan’s legacy of making a difference.

Recently, Sue had the opportunity to walk with her youngest son, in Evan’s memory, as a part of the Healing Hearts team for Coldest Night of the Year, an annual Canada wide fundraiser organised in Oceanside by Island Crisis Care Society, in aid of programs for people who have experienced homelessness.



“It was a very bittersweet night,” Sue says.

Last year, Evan walked with Sue and her team, proudly stepping forward to support people in need – people he understood so well. “Last year my son Evan walked with me, with our Orca team... and this year he didn’t.”

Instead, this year, his brother walked with Sue, and carried Evan’s boots, as a symbol of their loss – but also of the love that they still share.

Moved by the commitment of Sue and her son to walk in this year’s event, despite – and in many ways because of – her loss, the organizers invited her to share her story at the opening ceremonies. She was nervous, but, with Evan’s face before her, she did it.

“I spoke about why I was walking. We had a Healing Hearts team...with three other moms and other family members who have lost children to substance use harms.” For all, the moment of walking together was a statement of hope in the face of their loss.

A hope that Sue wants to continue to turn into action. Already, she is advocating for more services and for change at the municipal, provincial and national level as a member of Moms Stop the Harm (www.momsstoptheharm.com), a network of Canadian families impacted by substance-use-related harms and death.

Sue hopes to carry Evan’s advocacy forward, to make a difference for people who, like her son, have struggled. She wants to bring awareness to the crisis, “because he would’ve done that.”

Sue is committed to making an impact from the seeds of something that’s been terrible. There is hope that a scholarship will be established in Evan’s name for others who want to move forward from pain in their past to study as support workers.

It has been a hard road, but one which Sue is not willing to slow down on. The pain is still there, but the passion to turn it to good remains.

There is a quote she recalls, from Gertrude Stein, which encompasses her movement forward. “In the morning there is meaning, in the evening there is feeling.”

Both the meaning, and the feeling that still besets her in her down times, help her move forward to create healing for others in need.

(Story by ICCS writing volunteer)



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NEWCASTLE ART SHOW

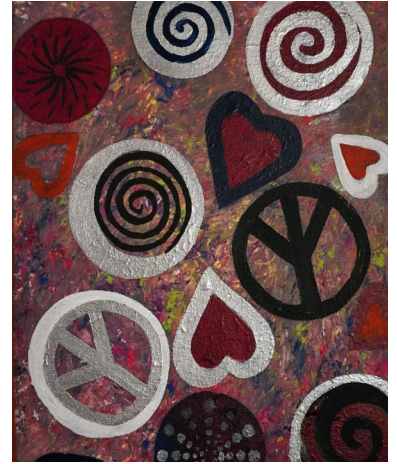
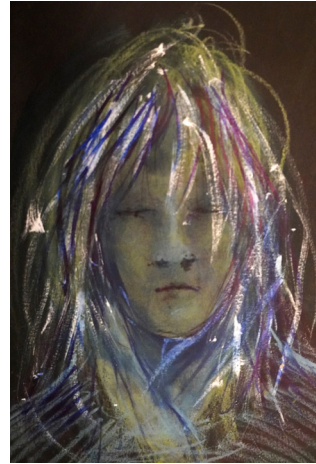
Last December just before Christmas staff and clients of ICCS had the opportunity to visit the 3rd Annual Art Show & Exhibit at Newcastle Place.

Much like in previous years, it was truly incredible to see such talent and range of art showcased. Submitted works included drawings, paintings, collages, mixed media art and carvings.

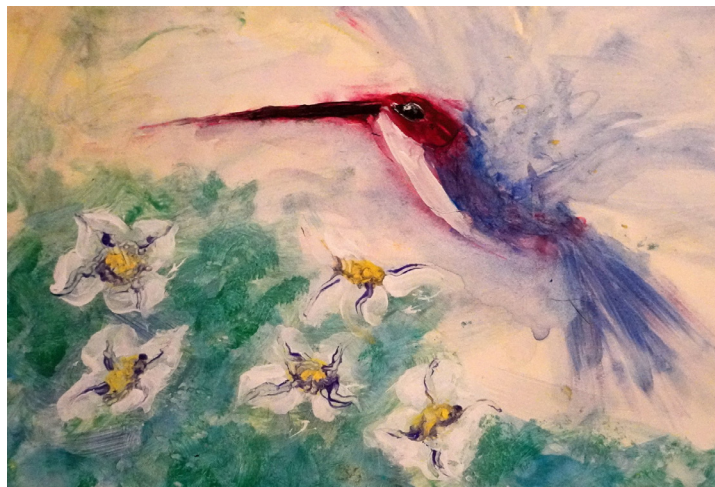
We are proud of everyone who took part and hope you enjoy this selection of art pieces that were on display!



ORVILLE DRAKE (2ND FROM RIGHT, 1ST PLACE WINNER WITH HIS WOODEN BOWL BELOW



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM: ART BY CHRISTOS GLAROS, MELVIN GOOD (LOVE AND PEACE), CHELSY CONNERS (3RD PLACE WINNER AND HER DRAWING)



CHRISTOS GLAROS (LEFT), 2ND PLACE WINNER, WITH HIS PAINTING HUMMINGBIRD, CHRISTMAS GNOME BY NICOLE JOLLI

THANKS TO OUR DONORS

We are very grateful for all of the wonderful friends and donors who give generously to our programs and clients. Every donation is appreciated, and makes a positive difference. We can't mention them all, but here are a few highlights that show some of the generosity we have seen through the past quarter.

- Khalsa Aid Canada
- Altrusa International of Nanaimo
- Nanoose Bay Lions Club
- The Queens
- Purdy's Chocolates
- Garrett Paquette Foundation
- And many more

Thank you all for your care!



GIFTS AND CARE FROM KHALSA AID CANADA TO WOMEN AT SAMARITAN PLACE BRIDGE TO HOUSING. MAKING A DIFFERENCE!
FEATURED: AMAN HAIR, ANJULI GUPTA AND SUKHMANN CHAHAL



GRATEFUL FOR THE GENEROSITY AND COMMUNITY SPIRIT OF THE NANOOSE BAY LIONS CLUB (LEFT) AS WELL AS PURDY'S WHO DROPPED OFF BOXES OF CHOCOLATE FOR CLIENTS



A HUGE THANK YOU TO THE GARRETT PAQUETTE FUND FOR FAMILIES IN NEED FOR THEIR GENEROUS DONATION!



A BIG THANK YOU TO THE QUEENS FOR AN AMAZING EVENING OF MUSIC AND FOR DONATING ALL PROCEEDS TO ICCS!

Thank you to our donors who came together to gather Christmas presents for ICCS clients. The beautiful things that were pulled together meant that people who might otherwise have rued the season had a chance to celebrate and know that someone, somewhere thought of them and wished them well. Special thanks to:

Christina, Megan and the Nanaimo team (and kids!) from Everyone Deserves a Smile, Laura Kelsey and the Nanaimo Shoebox Project, Joanne Iormetti, Katie and Oceanside Church Nanaimo, Altrusa International of Nanaimo, BC, Brechin United Church, Sandra Vichert, Berwick on the Lake, Katie's Korner, Michelle Edmonds, Brenda Kerney, Deerwood Community Association, St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church Nanaimo, Hammond Bay Baptist Church and Volunteer Andrew who helped with deliveries



EDAS STUDENTS COMING TO DELIVER GIFTS TO SAMARITAN PLACE



HAND PAINTED BAGS WITH CARE ITEMS PUT TOGETHER BY EDAS STUDENTS



LEFT: CHRISTMAS GIFTS READY TO BE DELIVERED TO CLIENTS

"It is incredible to see such generosity."

Jayne Heys, ICCS Volunteer who coordinated Christmas present packing.

CNOY 2023

Despite the snow and cold experienced, Coldest Night of the Year broke fundraising records in Nanaimo and Oceanside this year.

A huge THANK YOU to all walkers, volunteers and donors for all your hard work. We very much appreciate you and your contributions will make a big impact. Thank you!!

Money raised in Nanaimo will support programs such as Project Rise, offering training and work experience to clients, as well as the Lifeskills for Community Connection project. Money raised in Parksville-Qualicum Beach will go to local programming, including Oceanside Outreach offering assistance to people needing “check-ins and support to maintain housing” and for programming at Orca Place and Hirst House.

Here are some snapshots of CNOY 23. What a great event it was!



FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:
 ICCS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
 VIOLET HAYES OPENING CNOY23
 IN PARKVILLE, CNOY PARKVILLE
 STAGE, BARBARA WAINE (TOP
 FUNDRAISER IN NANAIMO),
 KENT (MANAGER AT NANAIMO
 BAKERY AND CAFE) WITH FAMILY
 WALKING IN NANAIMO

FROM TOP TO BOTTOM:
 VOLUNTEERS IN
 NANAIMO, CNOY
 WALKERS, SALVATION
 ARMY FOOD TRUCK
 SERVING SOUP,
 VOLUNTEERS AND
 WALKERS WITH MASCOT

VOLUNTEER WEEK

Every year in April we celebrate National Volunteer Week. Volunteering weaves us together and strengthens the fabric of our community by sharing our time, talent and energy to support one another.

We are so thankful for all the work, care and energy our volunteers give to ICCS. THANK YOU!!



JODI, OUR VOLUNTEER OF THE MONTH, WITH SARA (VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR)



FROM TOP LEFT TO BOTTOM:
NANAIMO VOLUNTEERS ON A TOUR OF SAMARITAN PLACE LED BY RONELL BOSMAN (SAMARITAN PLACE PROGRAM MANAGER), VOLUNTEERS AT ORCA PLACE IN PARKSVILLE IN CONVERSATION WITH VIOLET HAYES (ICCS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR), ICCS SPECIFIC STATISTICS

63	NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS SUPPORTING ICCS, OUR CLIENTS AND OUR MISSION IN 2022
3,223	VOLUNTEER HOURS LOGGED LAST YEAR!
42	PEOPLE ON AVERAGE THAT VOLUNTEER EACH MONTH WITH ICCS
\$54,000	AT CURRENT MINIMUM WAGE EQUALING A FINANCIAL GIFT OF ALMOST \$54,000



LifeSkills for Community Connection

A moment of elegance, sharing and joy was had a few weeks ago at both Samaritan Place, Orca Place and at Newcastle Place, with the first ever editions of the “West Coast High Tea”, bringing program staff and clients together for a delightful afternoon of refinement - and of course, tea! Born out of the Lifeskills for Community Connection program, the events were a reminder that everyone deserves to feel special and cared for, and to have a good tea party once in a while!

Through years of experience, ICCS has learned that people who have experienced homelessness need more than just shelter; they need support to adapt, move forward, and find skills and confidence that can help them towards recovery, community connection, well-being and independence. The Lifeskills for Community Connection program supports this opportunity for change, creating new mechanisms for clients to access learning and lifeskills that will lead to their longer term well-being, recovery and development.

The program launched in last year and has been building on great work already being done at the program level to support clients in learning and confidence. Focus is on the three ICCS supportive housing facilities - Samaritan Place and Newcastle Place in Nanaimo and Orca Place in Parksville. The intent of the program is to be flexible in approach to adapt to individual needs, supporting clients towards full development of their personal potential.





Project Rise is a new program of Island Crisis Care Society (ICCS) aimed to deliver pre-employment and employment skills training and work placement opportunities to people who have experienced homelessness, but are now ready to re-integrate more fully into independence and community life. Many ICCS clients face barriers to employment and re-connection to the community, based on adversity in their past, and the stigma of their present. This new program aims to fill that gap, supporting clients who have moved towards independence in housing but are unable to access the employment market take the next steps forward to regain the rhythm of community life.

While our residential programs strive to support clients where they are, the leap from homelessness to supported housing to independent community life is great. Unless we equip clients with real skills they can use to find a way back to community, to navigate through the job market and to fill gaps in knowledge and experience from how to balance a cheque book to how to communicate effectively with others, the leap is often too great.

With these essential skills, however, possibility is born. This is the intent of Project Rise.

Participants in the program will first access specific pre-employment training, followed by the possibility of practical work placements.



PROJECT RISE COHORT 1/2023 GRADUATES WITH STEPHEN COCHRANE
(PROJECT RISE COORDINATOR)

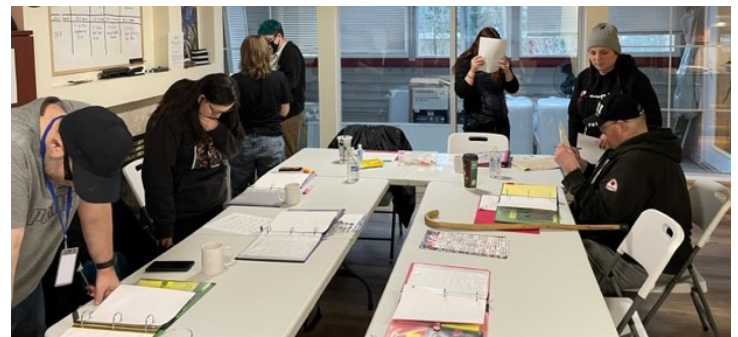
Participants go through a series of workshops and trainings such as essential employment skills (reading, writing, computer skills, numeracy, job readiness), job skills (customer service, interview skills, food/craft/gardening/ carpentry skills), life skills (time management, communication, budgeting, housekeeping), personal growth (self care, hygiene, interpersonal relationships) and certification in first aid, foodsafe, and naloxone usage.

Following the workshop and trainings part of the program, participants attend a job fair where work hosts interview potential employees. Participants are placed in work opportunities following the interview process. Past and current work placements have included: Kiwanis Village, Pryde Vista Golf Course, Salvation Army, Loaves and Fishes, a variety of landscaping companies, farms and construction companies, Coop Gas Bars, U-lock storage, Nanaimo Foodshare, Curvavoom and the Nanaimo Bakery and Café.



SOME OF PROJECT RISE COHORT 3 GRADUATES WITH STEPHEN COCHRANE

“I am learning a lot of stuff. It’s awesome. I am truly enjoying everything.” ~Justin



PARTICIPANTS DURING A WORKSHOP AT THE ICCS COMMUNITY OFFICE



“I like that the program accommodates people with barriers. It is unique in that way and a good fit for me.”

JENNIFER, PROJECT RISE PARTICIPANT