

The Bridge

The John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland of BC

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Hats off to us!

The Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) completed their assessment of the Agency and granted another three year accreditation certificate that is good until June 2010. This is particularly good news because the Agency received Governance accreditation – a rarity in British Columbia’s non-profit sector. CARF granted accreditation to Vancouver Apartments and the Vancouver Outreach Program for an additional three years and also granted accreditation for the first time to Host Family Services (ICN) and Supported Living (Miller Block). This could only happen because all of us worked hard to make it happen as I know we will when we add the Federal Halfway Houses, Community Services, POP Program and Prison Services accrediting or as is said “Carfing” the entire agency in 2010. What does this say about us? Simply, the certificate is saying we are trying to be the best we can with the human and financial resources we have to work with while always working towards loftier goals. I would encourage everyone to view the entire report that discusses the areas we need to address along with our Quality

Launch of our New Website in September

Improvement Plan showing our time frames to deal with the recommendations listed in the report on our website at: www.jhslmbc.ca. In their report CARF stated the agency has strengths in many areas we should be proud of as follows:

- ★ The staff go above and beyond the job requirements
- ★ Our funders know our strengths
- ★ The organization emphasizes staff and client safety
- ★ The agency has a strong appreciation for the ICN model as compared to a staff model of community services
- ★ Our effort to provide a continuum of services for people and the way we maintain connections

with people

- ★ We are pro-active as shown in the upstairs program at Vancouver Apts.
- ★ The Board is very committed
- ★ We promote board and staff education
- ★ We have very committed management staff
- ★ We have a future vision
- ★ We have a strong financial operation

Cheers to us. We should be proud of our abilities. Our determination to reach our goals while at the same time dealing with all the frustration and stress that accompanies us on our journey is a great achievement.
- Dale



Tims Manor Opening of Affordable Housing Units

While the fall season is upon us, we are moving ahead with the completion of Tim's Manor located at 32160 Tim's Avenue in Abbotsford, BC. An open house will be held on November 6th, 2007. We hope to have in attendance the Mayor of Abbotsford and Local Council Members along with CMHC our main supporter in this venture and other distinguished guests. We would also like to acknowledge Bill Morrison for all of his hard work on this project, RONA for their donation of 10 new toilets and discounts on many items, Tip Top Carpets for their donations and the many furniture gifts we have received from our members and supporters. We continue to look for televisions for these units. If you have been contemplating purchasing a new flat screen and are in need of justifying this purchase consider donating your old television to the JHSLM so we may have someone make use of it.

We are pleased to announce our recent partnership with the Correctional Service of Canada to provide an Outreach Worker to assist the tenants residing in the building. These supports will assist women, men and their families attain their dreams and live healthy lives. The units are available to any person or family who meets BC Housing's affordable housing criteria. The Agency reserves the final decision on the placement of tenants within the apartment building.

- Tim V

Annual General Meeting With Lesra Martin, Guest Speaker

Lesra Martin was the special guest speaker at the JHSLMBC's, 78th Annual General Meeting, held on September 20, 2007.

Over 20 years ago, Lesra Martin was a poor, illiterate teenager, who was struggling to survive on the mean streets of Bushwick, New York – an economically depressed borough of Brooklyn. A chance encounter with a group of Canadian law students changed the course of Lesra's life.

Lesra, given a fresh start in Toronto, learned to read, went to law school, and became a hero, when he helped overturn the wrongful conviction of his idol, boxing legend, Rubin 'The Hurricane' Carter.

Lesra's story was featured in the Oscar nominated film, 'The Hurricane' starring Denzel Washington. In addition, Lesra's story was the subject of a best-selling book entitled 'Lazarus and the Hurricane', and a National Film Board of Canada

documentary entitled 'The Journey of Lesra Martin'.

Lesra Martin has been a guest of the Oprah Winfrey Show and Larry King Live.

The John Howard Society of the Lower Mainland recently became an advisor to the University of British Columbia's Innocence Project. The mission of the Innocence Project is to investigate and identify cases of wrongful conviction and assist in the securing the release of individuals who have been wrongfully convicted.

Lesra's message of hope and courage was inspirational to our staff, volunteers and members as it underlined the restorative justice principles that define and drive our organization.

- Elaine

Photo of JHLSM's President Pamela Smith-Gander with Lesra Martin

JHS Yukon Open

In September, Ross Greenwood (JHSBC Board of Director) and I attended the launch of the John Howard Society and Elizabeth Fry Society of the Yukon Territory. We attended a potlatch with many community representatives along with the Minister of Justice, Marian Horne, the MP for Yukon, Larry Bagnell, who also sits on the Commons Justice Committee and the Grand Chief of the Council of Yukon First Nations, Andy Carvill. The following day we attended a meeting with Minister Horne and her Deputy Dennis Cooley to discuss areas of

identified need within Justice System. We then visited the Yukon Territory Custody Centre and had the opportunity to meet with three dorm representatives.

The men at the correctional centre expressed many concerns relating to the structure of the correctional centre and the number of populations within such a small facility. The facility houses female offenders, remand, protective custody, pre-trial, general population, Federal Offenders awaiting transfer and segregation. The men also expressed concerns

on release including lack of affordable housing, employment and positive social support.

The JHS Yukon faces many challenges that any new Society does. They have established a Board of Directors of very caring citizens who want to see improvements to justice in the Territory. The challenges they face like many are start up and sustainability funds. The JHSBC has offered program support and invited the JHS Yukon to attend our meetings.

- Tim V



wired smoked detectors and gas detectors in the furnace rooms. The security system has been upgraded and is connected to a monitoring system. This past summer central air conditioning was installed.

We were fortunate to have assistance with the upgrades to Hobden House. We received a very generous donation of \$5,000.00 to assist with the upgrades. A resident assisted us with the purchase of the window blinds and the contractor who renovated the kitchens donated a brand new stove to Hobden House.

What do all the changes mean to the staff and residents? Over all it means a comfortable place for the residents to live and a safe and a healthier environment for everyone.

Thank you, to everyone who gave donations, their expertise and time, without the commitment and generosity we would not have completed our renovations.

- Pat

Upgrades and Renovations

For the past 18 months Hobden House has had several upgrades to the facility beginning with a complete renovation of both kitchens. The floors were removed and new sub-floors were installed. New tile floors were added, along with new cupboards, counter tops, exhaust fans, light fixtures, sinks and taps. Next came the new carpets in the common areas, light fixtures, base

boards and painting all the main rooms. We also upgraded one of the 4 bathrooms for residents who have physical disabilities. The two staff offices also received a fresh coat of paint, light fixtures and tile floors. New blinds were installed in many of the rooms.

Hobden House security has been upgraded. All the rooms have hard

Celebrating Community Living Day

On October 3rd, Vancouver Apartments and Outreach collaborated with CLBC and other agencies and hosted Community Living Month at Granville Island. The purpose of the event was to promote our services individually and the Community Living as a whole. The event takes place every year to educate the public of our services and to celebrate Community Living Month. It was an opportunity for neighboring agencies to collaborate with CLBC and host an event of festivities.

This year we hosted a harvest theme and offered a wide range of crafts for people to make for the holidays. The John Howard Society team set up a table for people to make pumpkin magnets, offered manicures and gave away JHS mugs, t-shirts and bags

by asking people to answer trivia questions. Other agencies offered face painting, crafting spiders and turkeys, decorating apples and raffling baskets full of items each agency donated.

I just wanted to thank everyone that came out to support this event and all the volunteers who stood outside in the miserable weather to participate in this event. So, Thank you Alanna, Joelle, Barry and Rob. It was a great event and I had a wonderful time painting Larry's face, receiving all



those wonderful crafts from Angela, and Ramjit's infectious laughter. A big thank you to Barry for dressing up as a scarecrow to help create the "buzz" and informing people at Granville Island that this event was taking place near the courtyard.

Until next year!
- Jen

Goal for a Paperless Office

As we move closer to 2008, we would like to use more electronic communication. We believe in keeping administrative costs as low as possible so we can get the funds directly to our clients. Please fill out the information below, cut this section out and mail it to us. Alternatively, you can send us an email with your own email address and a request that you receive future correspondence via email. Our email is: personnel@jhsImbc.ca

Your full name: _____

Your email address: _____

Thank you for responding!
The John Howard Society of the LM
763 Kingsway
Vancouver, BC V5V 3C2

Looking for John Howard

Prison and Community Services responded to over 2000 requests from clients last year, or about 8 a day based on a 249 day working year (260 minus 11 observed holidays), which is the simplest way of looking at it really. The math starts to get a bit scary when you start to consider vacation time, lieu time, and all of that. All of these inquiries that come in are handled by JHS staff, practicum students and volunteers, and I think I can speak for everyone working here at the office when I say that we are proud of the work we do on these files, regardless of the nature of the request, its complexities, or simplicities, I think that our staff and volunteers approach each of them with a desire to provide the best possible service to those in need of our assistance. With that in mind I wanted to share with you one such case that I felt was particularly rewarding for me.

I was contacted via email by a woman in Toronto, who was interested in knowing whether we could assist her in locating her brother. She explained that she had not spoken to him in many years, and that the recent death of a neighbour with whom she was close had made her realize that life is far too unpredictable to wait any longer in trying to contact him. In talking with this woman on the phone I learned much about her brother. He was middle aged, of average height, had struggled with issues

of addiction and homelessness for much of his life and had been known in the past to move between being incarcerated, and living in the rooming houses of the Downtown East Side. Easy enough I thought. Over the next couple weeks I spoke on the phone with what felt like every single service provider servicing the downtown east side of Vancouver. I left messages at the health contact centre, I spoke with government employees, and exchanged information employees at shelters and detox facilities. The conversations even started to get funny as I and my counter part tried hard to be helpful to each other while trying just as hard to respect and honour the confidentiality agreements we had signed. "I know you can't tell me that you know such a person, but if you happened to bump into someone by that name it would really help me out if you could let them know I am looking for them" I'd say. "Well I can't promise anything, but stranger things have happened, I suppose" would come the reply. This went on for several weeks, and although my friend in Toronto remained encouraging and optimistic, I hated to admit it, but I didn't really see this one turning out the way I wanted it to.

It wouldn't be much of a story if it ended there, and I'm happy to say that we did find that guy. He was just here one day, all of a sudden, sitting in the lobby and

explaining that he basically couldn't turn around these days without somebody telling him that a guy named John Howard from Court wanted to talk to him. Eventually he figured out it was the other way around and found his way to my door. The best part was that he was doing really well, having been clean for nearly 3 years and residing in a transitional housing program designed to assist him in moving from addiction and the street, into his own apartment over a 2 year span. After all this good news, I can't pretend it wasn't a bit of a disappointment when he told me that while he was glad to know his sister was interested in speaking to him, he just wasn't ready to call her, and didn't know if he would be. He did however, give me permission to pass on a message to her, explaining that he was still around and in better shape than he had been in a long time. My contact in Toronto for her part was thrilled with the information we provided, and in her words, "at least I know he is well, and the peace of mind that brings is immeasurable".

It's these sort of files that keep me coming in happy every day, small gains, small successes, and knowing that the work we do here is so important to the people we do it for.

- Court

Welcome and Goodbye

We would like to welcome Alexandra, George, Eliza, to our staff team for Hobden House and Guy Richmond Place.

Elaine is the new Director of Communications and Development at the Regional Office.

A special thanks to the organizers of Sports Day and the Annual General Meeting.

The Agency wishes to acknowledge the contributions of our retiring colleagues from the National Parole Board Pacific

Region Gus Richardson, Patrick Storey and Dan Denis in the fall of 2007. Gus, Patrick and Dan have been strong supporters of the JHS Society and have assisted many women and men plan for their safe re-entry to the community.

Practicum Power

Heading into any new environment I am always reserved and a little nervous. My practicum placement with the John Howard Society was no exception as I approached the unique brick building on Kingsway and entered through the door. Court welcomed me in, and quickly had me feeling like I was one of the team. It wasn't long before he had me set up reading through client mail and trying to answer and help them to the best of my ability. I started out asking questions and have continued to ask questions almost to the point of annoyance in my mind. But there must be something in the air, or the coffee here at John Howard, as everyone in the office has been courteous and helpful. The atmosphere in this office is unique in that it feels more alive and interactive. Everyone treats one another as if they were family and whenever I have had a question or made an inquiry, it has not been difficult finding help. Every time I come to work, I look forward to new requests for help and getting involved in as many ways as possible.

Although I have been with the John Howard Society for under a month, I have already been able to help many clients both incarcerated and out in the community with issues they are having difficulty with. The requests are as diverse as they are plenty. Even with 2 practicum students here at the office we have still been unable to fully catch up to all the requests. One woman stands out in particular to me as she contacted us about obtaining a pardon. Her family had been going through a rough period. She was caring for 2 young children and her husband was suddenly no longer able to work. Trying to make ends meet, she had applied for a new job and was worried a criminal record would hold her back. She needed information on a Pardon, but did have the money to hire a professional to help her with it. Having dealt with 2 other requests for Pardon information, I felt comfortable assisting this client with her dilemma. I informed her about the Pardon process and talked it through with her step by step. In regards to her employment I informed her to be upfront about her concern with her

employers so if they checked for a record they would not be surprised. By the end of our conversation she was confident in her course of action with her potential new employment and was prepared to take the first step in applying for her pardon.

Providing a helping hand and showing people that a stranger would be willing to take time to try and help can really make a difference in someone's life. Just knowing that someone is there to help you when you need it can give you the confidence to attempt new things and start believing in yourself. Working with the JHS is a great experience. Helping others is something that always leaves me feeling better about myself which selfishly is one of the main reasons why I am interested in a career where I can help people. The JHS has given me the ability to experience helping many people who have been in trouble with the law; the same people that I believe are in the most need of help.

- James

Running Out of Room

The Community Services Team have been extremely busy over the last several months and with other expanding programs within our Miller Block office we have run out of space. To respond to this challenge the Board of Directors approved the expansion of a new office located at 752 Kingsway, Vancouver, across the street from the Miller Block. This new space will form the new home of our Community Services Program and our

Outreach Program. As The John Howard Society continues to grow and expand, this much needed space will enable the expansion and development of new ventures and the growth of Community Services, while allowing more much needed space at head office.

Community Services provides information and services to those impacted by the criminal justice system. Through drop in visits,

letters, phone calls, prison visits, front line assessments, referrals and advocacy the team connects clients to resources that promote community wellbeing.

- Tim P

Sports Day

On Friday, June 29th, I attended the John Howard Society Sports Day at Trout Lake. There was lots of food available at Sports Day such as hot dogs, hamburgers, fruit, drinks, and chocolate cake! After eating food and talking with people connected with the John Howard Society, I participated in some games. The first game I played was the 3-legged race with Jen. I remember Jen kept telling me to “slow down”, but I kept running as fast as possible. After the 3-legged race, I participated in the water balloon toss. Jen and I were able to toss the balloon to each other three

times before the balloon burst on me! I was soaking wet, but the weather was nice and I dried off quickly. I had lots of fun at the John Howard Society Sports Day this year and I look forward to the next Sports Day in 2008.

- Ramjit



Barriers in the Workplace

I am grateful to have been selected to attend the BC Association for Community Living conference, held in Prince George this year. The conference was relevant to me, not only on a professional level, but personally as well since I have a 20 month old son with Down syndrome. My favorite part of the experience was meeting some of the 150 people with disabilities attending as self advocates and hearing first hand how fulfilling their lives are.

The overall theme of this year's conference was 'jobs for everyone', with a majority of the workshops revolving around employment for people with disabilities. I think that some of the challenges faced by this marginalized community are probably shared by the federal parolees served by the JHSLM, whose stigmatization is also a barrier to the workplace. Prospective employers need to be convinced of the merit of hiring someone whose life has been something other than 'normal'.

The most enlightening workshop I attended was presented by an agency from Terrace. Facing high unemployment, the presenters said that traditional job-seeking methods were useless, as hundreds of people would compete for a single advertised job. They came up with ingenious ways of 'job-carving'. They would tour worksites, note inefficiencies, and then create proposals for how things could be more cost-effective. One example involved a bank where all of the deposits dropped through the automated teller slot would pile up over the weekend and a bank teller would spend hours every Monday matching up the deposit envelopes with the machine print-outs and making sure everything balanced properly, a tedious job which she dreaded. They placed a young woman with Down syndrome and strong office skills there part-time. She loved her job and did so well that they found other office work for her to do and it grew to a full-time position. Having an inclusive worksite benefits everyone, staff morale and job satisfaction

increase, public image swells, and employee turnover decreases.

The biggest surprise for me was the negative regard held by everyone for the government subsidy which is offered as incentive for employers to hire individuals with challenges. Everyone agreed that it detracted from the goal of achieving a fair wage for real work. Too often the job would be discontinued as soon as the time-limited subsidy ran out, resulting in demoralized clients who didn't understand why they were no longer wanted.

Career development aside, I am proud and grateful to work for an agency that sent me to a beautiful location where the weather, food and hotel were exemplary! In essence, I enjoyed an all expenses paid vacation from my REAL full-time job at home with a one year old and a barely three year old, where I have to cook, nobody else makes my bed, and the conversation is not nearly as stimulating.

- Christina

**JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF THE
LOWER MAINLAND OF BC**

763 Kingsway
Vancouver, BC V5V 3C2



www.jhslmbc.ca

*A Registered Charitable Society
#10754 2573 RR001
Member of the United Way*

How can I help the JHSLM?

Yes, I want to

Be a Member

Make a Donation

Be a Volunteer

Be notified of the Justice Open

Donate Clothes

Pass this newsletter along
to a friend

Price

\$15.00

Method of Payment

Check

Cash

Visa

Visa #

Exp. date

Signature

Total: _____

Name

Address

Phone