



Coast **TO** Coast



CIRCLE OF LIGHT

On November 22, 2002, All Saints' Church and St. Leonard's House Windsor held a dedication ceremony for a commemorative window, designed by Laura Becker, installed on the west wall of Scott Hall of All Saints' Church. The accompanying plaque reads:

"This rose window symbolizes the outreach of All Saints' Church in founding St. Leonard's House for ex-prisoners at 491 Victoria Avenue, Windsor, in 1962, inspired by the vision of the Rev. T. Neil Libby.

"May this window be a beacon that continues to turn the darkness of indifference to prisoners into rays of hope and healing.

"A gift from St. Leonard's House Windsor in commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of All Saints' Anglican Church."

What Is a Halfway House?

And, what do you want to know about it?

And, how would you know what it is that you want to know?

And so on.

These are just a few of the questions that St. Leonard's Society of Canada is exploring with colleagues in the government and the voluntary sector as we continue our phased research project with the Correctional Service of Canada and other partners. In March, we co-hosted our second advisory committee meeting. Representatives of a range of halfway house service providers and other non-governmental organizations, researchers, corrections and parole board representatives, met for two days to consider the preliminary results of the descriptive phase of our examination of the effectiveness of halfway houses.

At the meeting, distribution began of a hard copy of a list of community residential facilities that was compiled by Correctional Service of Canada and St. Leonard's staff over the summer of 2002. The contribution of CSC's Community Corrections office to the printing and mailing of this list to all of the halfway houses in the country is one major step in making information about the current

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News and Views

Multi-culturalism and the Voluntary Sector

On February 17, 2003 the National Associations Active in Criminal Justice (NAACJ) hosted a one-day consultation in Ottawa to raise awareness of the changing, racialized population within Canadian prisons, the criminal justice system, and the population as a whole. Facilitated by the Canadian Training Institute (CTI) and attended by all NAACJ member organizations, the day's discussions encouraged each member agency to commit to the kinds of action required to

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Government and the Voluntary Sector: Meeting at the Crossroads of Restorative Justice

In 2001 the Conflict Resolution Network Canada (CR Network) was tasked with engaging the Restorative Justice community on the Draft UN and Draft Canadian Principles of Restorative Justice. Through funding by the Portfolio of the Solicitor General and the Department of Justice, the consultation was conducted in parallel at both the micro and macro levels. At the micro level was a 12 member National Policy Review Panel. The Panel was created with a view to ensuring that a variety of perspectives were included in the consultation process. This group, of which I had the honour of being a member, met twice over the past year in order to inform the proceeding stage of the process and to review in detail the principles and guidelines. At the macro level, the broader community was engaged through the process of virtual dialogue. Susan Sharpe facilitated both the virtual discussion on UN Principles of Restorative Justice (Fall 2002) and the Draft Canadian principles of Restorative Justice (Winter 2003).

In the true spirit of collaboration, the final report will document all of the voices heard throughout the project, detailing points of convergence and divergence. It was the unanimous view of the Panel that the Draft Canadian Values and Principles was a distinct improvement over the Draft United Nations proposals. We felt the UN document was primarily geared towards producing alternative-sentencing agreements out of a facilitated negotiation. It was clear to us that while the UN group was well intentioned, its document was watered down by the effort to create a common ground for universal RJ principles. The final product did not reflect the uniquely Canadian perspective on a field which, in Canada, is geared towards addressing the human needs of people affected by crime.

The St. Leonard's Society of Canada was one of many organizations invited to contribute a discussion paper on the Draft Canadian Principles and Program Guidelines for Restorative Justice. At the last meeting of our affiliate Executive Directors we had a lively discussion on the principles, and the views expressed at that meeting were later endorsed by the National Board of Directors. The Society supported the Draft Principles but raised questions around the clarity of language, reality of implementation and the prescriptiveness of the definition provided. We were thankful for the opportunity to present our views.

This process has provided the voluntary sector and government with an enriching learning experience and for many it was an opportunity to have their voices heard and to hear the voices of the frequently silent policy makers. Restorative Justice is at a crossroads in Canada. We are approaching a point in the RJ movement where a fine line divides ensuring the safety of participants by insisting on safeguards and limiting communities by being too prescriptive. This dialogue process has been a rare opportunity for the RJ community to come together in the creation of values and principles that truly reflect all of Canada.

Cathy Ann Kelly, Researcher and Policy Analyst

Multi-culturalism (Continued from p.1)

Our mission: to prevent crime and promote responsible community living and safer communities

make our memberships more reflective of this changing demographic and to speak up for the needs of diverse populations dealing with the criminal justice system in Canada.

Statistics provided to participants in the consultation on the over-representation of black males and aboriginal offenders in Canadian prisons were not news.

NAACJ member agencies were reminded to use our unique position to influence public policy to arrest this situation and prevent a rapid replication of the US experience, particularly in relation to black populations. We can start by recognizing that members of racialized communities can experience further marginalization from service organizations. If a First Nations person attempting to access services through an NAACJ agency cannot find anyone in that agency familiar with aboriginal cultures, how "comfortable" and, therefore, willing to work with the agency could that person feel?

Presenters from diverse cultures provided personal experiences, some tragic, to underline the critical need for NAACJ agencies to heighten awareness, collect data, and use this data to broaden the definition of "community" in our mission statements and on our boards of directors. We were charged to lobby government at all levels to fund community projects to address racism.

As members of the St. Leonard's Society of Canada, we must accept the challenge to include strategies in our strategic planning which broaden our definition of the "community" we serve.

Rebecca L. Howse, President

What is a Halfway House? (Continued from p.1)

resources available to all. It will help operators to know more about each other and government to know more about what resources are available across Canada. Of course, since last summer there have been changes to the existing resources and it will be a significant challenge to ensure that the list is kept as up to date as possible.

The advisory committee meetings are key to our goal of informing the direction of this project to the greatest extent possible with the insight of the stakeholders in the field. Thanks to support from the Strategic Operations Directorate of the Solicitor General of Canada, the committee was convened to consider how the data collected during the descriptive phase might yield information to help us analyze what is happening at halfway houses.

Why is this important? As we move beyond data collection, it will be vital that we are clear as to what it is about halfway houses that we are trying to understand. There is a range of outcomes that may be achieved by the programs and services offered by these diverse residential agencies. We welcome suggestions from all who are interested as to where we should focus our examination. If the research is to bring forward useful documentation that can help build strength in meeting client and community needs, then it must be grounded in the realities faced in daily operations.

So, what is a halfway house? In the opinions of those present at the Advisory Committee meeting, it is a residence that:

- provides - an entrance to the community
- structured, safe, supportive supervision
- demonstrates community involvement and acceptance
- is - a safe place
- transitional and supportive
- a mission-driven organization
- has - caring staff
- voluntary sector governance, and
- flexibility in addressing needs on an individual basis.

Do you agree?

Elizabeth White, Executive Director

As for the other questions at the top of this article, we would welcome your responses electronically or any other way that works for you. Please see the back cover of this newsletter for details on how to reach us.

A Resident's Voice

from St. Leonard's Society of Nova Scotia, in Halifax

To whom it concerns:

I would like to thank the good Lord up above for opening the doors of St. Leonard's Society (Halifax) for me, along with the E. Fry Society, which went out of their way to do everything they could. When I first heard of St. Leonard's I knew absolutely nothing about the place. It sounded to me as if I would be staying with nuns and going to church on Sundays. There would be programs all week long, and then I was told there was no room there and that I would not like it there anyway. Then I got thinking: why would someone try and put me somewhere where I would not be happy? I was told bad stories about the place, so now I want to clear something up: St. Leonard's is a wonderful place and it is a halfway house for men and women and not a church as I believed. (If it were a church I would still come here.) The staff are wonderful and very understanding as well as pleasant, they are trained in different areas in which to deal with you. If they are not certain about a matter, then they just pick up the phone and call someone who is. Some call it home; I call it my nest away from home. Words can't explain how much I love it here at St. Leonard's. I feel they are caring people and want me and anyone else who comes through their doors to feel welcomed. But remember this: even if you feel scared when you first come here, you will be given respect for respect—don't blow it on yourself. Give yourself a chance, for that is what St. Leonard's is all about: starting over and learning to recover in the neighbourhood, and to avoid relapsing over and over again. Learning how to live life on the right side of the law, how to cope with families, money and people we hurt. Even getting a job—oh yes let's not forget, you even get your own job on the chore list. We are called residents here; they make you feel like a person and not like an inmate, only like a human being. What more could you ask for? There are a lot more good things I could say about St. Leonard's and its staff. I'll sum it up this way: I cannot express my gratitude enough and my thanks for a place like this to be available. To St. Leonard's and its staff, you are truly a blessing to me. A very special thanks to David Olding, CSC Chaplain for coming in, visiting, and giving the residents a lot of spiritual strength and support where it is needed.

Geraldine (Gerry) Dawe
Resident of Sir Sanford Fleming House
St. Leonard's Society of Nova Scotia, Halifax

SOCIETY INFO

St. Leonard's Community Services (Brant)

Presenting Haldimand Home:

The Need

According to the Child Welfare League's Environmental Scan conducted in April 2001, approximately 135,000 investigations of child maltreatment were conducted in Canada in 1998 and the estimated number of children in public care has increased by more than 50% during the past five years.

The Haldimand-Norfolk community is no exception.

At the present time there are more than 200 children within the Haldimand-Norfolk community in care of the Children's Aid Society and 50 kids must live outside their home due to the lack of residential resources in the region. Clearly, the need for Haldimand Home is sadly evident.

What will Haldimand Home do?

Haldimand Home will become a safe haven for 10 children aged 12 to 16 who have been removed from their homes and placed under the protection of the Children's Aid Society as a result of parental neglect, rejection, abandonment, physical and sexual abuse.

Social Workers describe this special group of children as having low self-esteem, poor social skills, learning disabilities and anger problems. But what this really means in everyday terms is that they have missed out on the most basic of human needs – to know that they have people who care for them, and some place where they belong.

These "throw away kids" will be referred to Haldimand Home not only for shelter, clothing, education, nutrition and medical needs, but our professional staff will also provide an on site educational opportunity and critically needed counselling to address such issues as mental illness, drug addiction, learning disabilities and poor life skills.

Haldimand Home will provide a caring, home-like atmosphere for boys and girls in need of a long-term structured environment. Some children will stay with us for up to four years.

Learning skills for positive use of leisure time will be an important part of life at Haldimand Home. An active structured recreational program will provide children with the chance to enjoy sports, swimming, arts and crafts and opportunities to participate in basic childhood activities.

Working in partnership with Children's Aid Society's Social Workers and a Child Psychologist, our Child and Youth Workers will form supportive relationships with kids to help them heal from their emotional scars. Staff will employ cognitive behavioural therapy to help children solve problems and manage their daily lives.

Children living at Haldimand Home will come primarily from the Haldimand, Norfolk, Brant, Hamilton and Niagara areas.

In addition to helping youth, Haldimand Home will also be a valuable asset to the Community. The program will bring new jobs and partnerships with local agencies including; Haldimand-Norfolk Children's Aid Society, REACH, Grand Erie District School Board, the Ontario Provincial Police and the Province of Ontario.

Building Haldimand Home

Today, plans for Haldimand Home are well underway. A one-acre parcel of land has been purchased near the community of Jarvis and engineers' plans have been drawn for a 4,000 square foot home that will include 10 bedrooms and the on-site school. Construction is scheduled to commence in the spring of 2003 with an anticipated opening of July 2003.

Bill Sanderson, Executive Director, SLCS

St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton

St. Leonard's Hamilton gains barrier free access

Have you ever wondered why most halfway houses are in the downtown of a city? Like the St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton, they probably started by looking for a house big enough for a residential program that was also close to services. Consequently, most halfway houses have taken up residence (so to speak) in big downtown houses. These are usually older homes that do not provide easy access to a handicapped person. This may explain why there are so few handicap accessible halfway houses. We knew there were none in Hamilton or the surrounding area. Faced with a lack of alternative options for our clients, we wanted to do something about this challenge.

There is a growing need and responsibility to provide services for the disabled. We also have an aging prison population and older offenders are more likely to have serious health problems. It's not just stairs either, but locked doors, showers, bathtubs and toilets. We recognized and wanted to provide easier access, but retrofitting an old house is expensive and often impractical.

The St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton operates two halfway houses in downtown Hamilton in older buildings. Both sites provide services to the same adult male, federal offender population. The front entrances to both sites make getting inside a problem for anyone in a wheelchair. We first consulted with a disabled person's resource group in Hamilton and found out what would be needed. We then brought in an architect to look at both locations for suitability. One of the houses turned out to be hopeless, but fortunately the thirty-bed Emerald Street Treatment



IMPROVED ACCESS INSIDE AND OUT

Above: exterior of St. Leonard's Society of Hamilton's Emerald St. Treatment Centre exterior, featuring a newly-installed ramp for wheelchair access. Below: a handicap accessible bathroom inside the Treatment Centre. Photos: John Clinton



Centre location could be turned into a fully accessible residence. We also run many non-residential programs out of this location, so making it accessible opened up the possibility of anyone in need of our services to be able to have access.

Even though it is a recognized need we found there were few

sources of funding for this type of project. We applied to Correctional Service of Canada for Effective Corrections funding to retrofit the Emerald Street halfway house into a fully accessible site. Our proposal was: to remove the existing front stairs and install a ramp from the sidewalk to the front door, to install a card-key system on doors to allow residents with mobility restrictions in their hands easier access to locked rooms, and to install a fully handicap accessible washroom with shower.

We initially hoped to put in a lift, as Emerald Street is a three-story facility. The lift would have given access to the whole site, but proved too expensive. Fortunately, we have bedrooms, kitchen, living room, dining area and washrooms all on the main floor, so even without the lift the essentials are in place. We also retrofitted the second and

third floor washrooms with special hardware for the toilets, tubs and showers.

On April 1, 2002, 24 Emerald Street South became the only federal halfway house in the Hamilton area able to accommodate disabled clients. A few residents have benefited already and we expect more as word gets out and people realize this community resource is now available.

John Clinton, Executive Director, SLSH

St. Leonard's Society of North Vancouver

Volunteerism

Volunteerism is the one defining aspect of private, non-profit agencies. Encouraging citizens to volunteer and to get involved in community corrections helps to bridge the gap between prison and life in the community. Providing meaningful volunteer activities for private citizens ensures they will be supporters and a resource in the future.

Seven years ago the St. Leonard's Society of North Vancouver entered into a partnership with Correctional Service of Canada to provide a Volunteer Programme. Our original objective was to recruit and utilize student volunteers for the purpose of increasing the pro-social activities and skills of our clients on community release, and to give the volunteers the opportunity to participate in community corrections. In addition, the programme has provided a staffing resource both for the private sector and Correctional Service of Canada.

The volunteers also conduct other special projects such as research and data collection, conference organization and provide the administrative support for our Volunteer Co-ordinator, Elaine Allen.

The programme over the past several years has trained and utilized over 150 volunteers from the Lower Mainland. Presently we have 65 trained volunteers providing services in the Vancouver Parole District. Some of the activities are games evenings, recreational outings, cultural functions etc. as well as educational tutoring, transportation assistance, arts and crafts.

We are now expanding our programme to include an offender-based Volunteer Work Experience Programme. This programme is designed for offenders to gain transferable job skills through volunteer activities. The Carnegie Centre, located in the centre of Vancouver's Eastside, will be the first site to provide volunteer opportunities for federal parolees.

We believe the volunteers are providing a valuable and effective service to the ex-offenders, to the corrections community and to the community at large.

Wilma Douglas-Dungey, Executive Director, SLSNV

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Larch Half Way House – Sudbury

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Maison «Cross Roads» – Montreal

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St. Leonard's Community Services – Brant

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

St. Leonard's Society of Canada will be holding its AGM in Ottawa, Ontario on May 31st, 2003, at the Minto Place Suite Hotel. Agenda items include: approval of agenda, minutes of previous AGM, actions of Board of Directors, and membership fees; receipt of reports of Board of Directors and Auditor; appointment of Auditor; disposition of policy resolutions; election of Directors of the Society and a resolution relating to the amendment of the Society's Bylaws.

A copy of proposed Bylaw amendments, proxy forms, and detailed information on AGM agenda items are all available from the Ottawa Office on request.

ABOUT US . . .

St. Leonard's Society of Canada is a national voluntary organization whose mission is to prevent crime and promote responsible community living and safer communities. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily shared by the editors or the Society. Submissions, inquiries and comments are welcomed. Please contact us at:

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Comings and Goings

SLSC was delighted to have Angie Chiang join our staff this winter as our new Administrative Assistant. Her presence contributes enormously to the smooth operation of our Head Office.

Cathy Ann Kelly, meanwhile, has taken on the new title of Researcher and

Policy Analyst, reflecting a renewed commitment of SLSC to these two areas.

The Board accepted with regret the resignation of Shawn Goudge as delegate from House of Hope. Thank you, Shawn for your valued service to St. Leonard's.

St. Leonard's Society
of Canada



Société St-Léonard
du Canada