



Moulding a life based on community and work

in this issue

- > JustWork: provides dignity in employment
- > Update: Co:Here Housing
- > Message from President & CEO, Rob Turnbull

Todd recycles clay through a pug mill. The recycled clay is used to fashion mugs and pottery by artists at JustPotters. See page 2 for story on JustWork Economic Initiative.



Being connected to his community and finding stability through work has been Todd's salvation from drug abuse and homelessness.

For almost two decades, Todd says his life was a predictable cycle of detox; treatment centre; recovery house; the occasional visit to the psych ward, ending with the inevitable relapse.

He smiles wryly, when he says it was his version of "rinse, wash, spin", but in his case there was a never ending repeat cycle.

"The only time I was clean was when I was in treatment for a couple of months, but as soon as I got out, I eventually went back to using."

It's no surprise he became addicted to drugs, he says, with an alcoholic father, and a mother who worked two jobs to keep the family of nine afloat and, understandably, was unable to give her children the full attention they needed.

Without a father and mother at home, alcohol and drugs became his companions.

"It was a case of monkey see, monkey do," says Todd.

At 16 he was an alcoholic; 18 addicted to crack; 21 homeless and sleeping in the crawlspace underneath his drug dealer's house. He spent his 20s literally trying to outrun his problems, moving from city to city across Canada. "But you know that doesn't work," he says, "Because wherever you go, there you are."

At 31, he entered what would be the first of about a dozen treatment programs. The final treatment centre turned his life around. According to Todd, he was able to tap into his spirituality and the belief in a higher power.

"Today is a good day," says Todd. "When I stay in the present, I feel blessed. When I start thinking about the past that's when I go down a dark path."

Todd has been working for the past year and a half at JustPotters, a social enterprise of JustWork Economic

Initiative, recycling clay so it can be refashioned by the artists working in the basement studio of Grandview Calvary Baptist Church.

"I have a sense of purpose in my life," says Todd. "Before I had all day and nowhere to go. Now, I feel like I'm part of the rhythm of the day. I like the energy of walking along the sidewalk with other people heading to work. I like coming to work, and I like the people who are here."

At 49, he still struggles to reconcile his past, but is in a good space right now: he's clean and sober; has a place to stay (McLaren Housing, a 110-unit project, partially funded by Streetohome); and feels a strong sense of community.

"I've got food in the house, money in the bank, and new shoes," says Todd. And with gratitude adds, "Not that there's anything wrong with wearing donated shoes, but it's a nice feeling when you can buy them yourself."

It's more than just a job



Ivan displays beautiful works of art, hand-made from clay.

Ivan van Spronsen, Executive Director, JustWork, has seen first-hand the transformative nature of employment. Employment can provide individuals with dignity, and a sense of meaning and belonging in the world.

“Human beings are wired to contribute, and to be part of something bigger than themselves. Work provides not only income, but purpose, and a remedy for social isolation, loneliness and poverty,” says Ivan.

JustWork Economic Initiative, a registered non-profit, operates three social enterprises in the Grandview-Woodlands neighbourhood to help individuals who face barriers to work in mainstream employment. JustPotters, JustCatering and JustRenos employ roughly 37 individuals, most working part-time to accommodate personal and physical challenges.

The economic initiative was born out of the Grandview Calvary Baptist Church community. After identifying that a lack of employment opportunities was a major challenge for many disadvantaged individuals, the church began to offer job counselling and resume writing, but soon discovered that individuals with the greatest barriers needed more help.

So, JustWork was formed as a social enterprise to give individuals access to jobs, with the support and flexibility they need. All three social enterprises are led by professionals, who co-ordinate work orders, and provide support for their team.

JustWork's 3-fold benefit includes:

- 1) Improving individuals' lives through meaningful employment at a fair wage
- 2) Providing quality goods and services valuable to consumers, and
- 3) Generating revenue to support the enterprise's mission

Currently, JustWork covers 80% of expenses through revenue-generating work, and 20% from donations.

While individuals are supported to move on to other opportunities, most remain long-term employees hired from the Grandview Woodlands community. Almost 50% have been with the social enterprise for five years or more.

“We believe in a hand-up rather than a hand-out,” says Ivan. “Individuals contribute to their own success,

“Individuals contribute to their own success, and they are a critical part of our success. This is not only a work-place, but a community which believes in supporting and helping each other grow to reach their full potential.”

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The 18 residents, who will be moving into Co:Here (see story next page) this time next year, may pursue work at JustWork enterprises as openings arise.

For more information on JustWork Economic Initiative, please visit: www.justwork.ca



JustRenos, JustCatering, and JustPotters are social enterprises operated by JustWork Economic Initiative.

Co:Here: an intentional community



Thomas Dickau, Salsbury Community Society, in front of Co:Here construction site in mid-November.

Just around Thanksgiving next year, residents will be moving into Co:Here, a newly constructed housing project located in the Grandview Woodlands neighbourhood.

Some might call it a social experiment with 18 residents who are at-risk of homelessness, living side-by-side with six to eight co-residents and their families who will pay a reduced rent and commit to fostering a supportive community.

Thomas Dickau – a member of the Salsbury Community Society, which will manage the day-to-day operations of the building is confident the unique model will succeed. He grew up in intentional community houses, where life was shared, friendships developed and support was offered, between a diverse group of people.

In the Grandview Woodlands Neighbourhood, Salsbury has operated community homes for 18 years with an operating model whereby individuals with greater financial

stability share life with those vulnerable to homelessness. Currently, Salsbury manages two community homes in the neighbourhood. For Thomas, Co:Here is a bigger version of what Salsbury has been doing for almost two decades, with the added-value of purpose built spaces to nurture human interaction and relationships.

Co:Here has been thoughtfully designed with layouts that invite gatherings and engagement, but also “private” space for individuals to retreat to when they need solitude. Entering on the main level, the layout invites shared living through community spaces including a large kitchen, dining room, living room and a quiet room. A courtyard and community garden provides outdoor space and garden area for residents and co-residents to grow their own fresh food.

Each studio, one-bedroom, or two-bedroom unit is self-contained and provides tenants with a kitchen and all the necessities of private, healthy, and comfortable living. In total, there will be 18 studio apartments, 4 one bedroom apartments, and 4 two bedroom apartments. Each floor will have an apartment for a co-resident family who will live side-by-side with residents.

The common values that residents and co-residents will share include a desire to build friendship; create a place of belonging; steward the building, space and each other; and forgive and be forgiven along the way.

Thomas describes the co-residents as the “yeast in the bread of community”. They will make a commitment to the health and well-being of their neighbours and the community as a whole. It is a relationship of equals – with residents and co-residents learning from each other, and pursuing relationships over material possessions.

The cost of the project is \$11.9 million, but once built, ongoing operational costs will be sustainable through rents paid by residents and co-residents. Streetohome has committed to raising \$520,000 for the project. For more info, please visit: coherehousing.com or salsburycs.ca

We're half-way home!

Streetohome has already raised \$260,000 towards our \$520,000 commitment to the Co:Here Housing Project. We are half way there and welcome discussion with prospective donors interested in contributing to this unique self-sustaining supportive housing operating model. Please contact Tracey Harvey, Streetohome Donor Manager if you would like additional information including a tour: 604.629.2711, local 101, or e-mail: tracey@streetohome.org



Graphic representation of Co:Here community. Illustration by Andrea Armstrong

A Message from Rob Turnbull



Wishing you the best of the season: Rob Turnbull, President & CEO (centre) with John McLernon, Board Chair (left); Papinder Rehnicy, Communications & Project Manager; and Tracey Harvey, Administration, Donor and Project Manager (seated).

It's the time of year when the inclement weather takes hold, and our thoughts turn to how the most vulnerable in our city, who are sleeping on the street or in parks, are managing to keep safe and warm. In early November, the City of Vancouver and BC Housing announced that 195 temporary beds will open in the city from November to the end of March as part of its Extreme Weather Response Program. This is in addition to shelter beds that operate year-round.

their community. Out of their deep commitment to helping those in need, the church made a decision to donate land for a community housing project with 18 homes for those who are homeless in the Grandview Woodlands neighbourhood. Salsbury Community Society will be the housing operator.

Co:Here Housing Community involves a unique approach to addressing homelessness in Vancouver. This is an innovative and cost effective supportive housing model. Co-residents pay a reduced rent in exchange for helping formerly homeless tenants develop independent living skills. Co-residents thereby reduce staffing costs typically associated with supportive housing. Rents and donations cover the remaining operational costs – setting this project aside from others in that it does not require annual operational funding from government.

In addition to Co:Here's 18 homes, significant progress is being made on the building of 21 homes at Cause We Care House; 52 homes at 41 East Hastings and 31 homes at Pacific Spirit Terrace. That is a total of 122 homes that will house many more individuals in 2017/18. However, housing is just one piece of the puzzle and, in the New Year, I look forward to sharing with you our plans, along with our partners, to address the addiction recovery; employment and education/training intentions of those who are

homeless, at risk of homelessness, or previously homeless.

In concluding another year, I would like to thank our donors for their generosity that allows us to broker and leverage this important work. I also extend appreciation to more than 70 volunteers from private, public and non-profit sectors that contribute their time and wisdom on Streetohome's committees. I look forward to continuing to work together to change lives and build futures for those who are homeless. On behalf of the Streetohome Board and staff, I wish you all a joyful holiday season and New Year.

Rob Turnbull, Ph.D., CHE
President & CEO, Streetohome

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Streetohome Foundation Board Vice-Chair, Lloyd Craig (far left) at the groundbreaking of Firehall #5 and YWCA's Pacific Spirit Terraces.

As individuals and a community, we often struggle to find meaningful ways to make a difference as the challenge of helping the homeless can seem overwhelming at times. The members of Grandview Calvary Baptist Church also grappled with how to help the increasing number of homeless in



Congratulations, John!

Streetohome Board Chair John McLernon will be inducted into the Business Laureates of British Columbia Hall of Fame in May 2017. The award is bestowed to individuals with outstanding business achievements, enduring contributions to the province, as well as a deep commitment to the community.