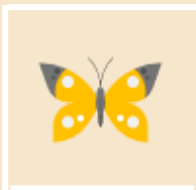


## STORY OF HOPE

The young man had been hanging around Grace Village for several weeks. His hands were caked in dirt. He seemed to have one change of clothes. The word on the street was that he had been eyeing my bike for its resale value. I introduced myself to him. He would not give me his name. And then, an opportunity came. He did a partial intake into Stabilization, then decided he wasn't quite ready. Our intake worker invited him to use the shower in the intake office. He accepted, then went on his way.



Vern texted me a picture this weekend of his twenty-year chip from A.A. After his "Sixties Scoop" experiences, after years on the street, in a street gang, in trouble with the law, Vern heard his mother say to him in a dream, 'live or die my boy, live or die'. Vern posted those words on his fridge and by the door to his apartment. He reached out to A.A and in time became a speaker at meetings. Four years ago, Vern came to stay in Transitional Housing. He started an addiction counsellor course at a local college. When COVID hit and everything went online it was too much for Vern. He was unable to finish the course. Undaunted, he began to work with the Red Road Society, eventually becoming their elder in residence. After a program participant's overdose death downtown, Vern came and smudged the space, then the whole end of the building, offering teaching, wisdom and encouragement to the program participants and staff. After a time, city life and the loneliness, he felt from a broken relationship, helped Vern to see that he needed to head back up north and get his feet on the ground again. He now lives near his family and grandchildren in Fort Smith. Our Transitional Housing program played a part in Vern's story. We were a safe, affordable and clean space for Vern to catch his breath when he needed to try some things and then continue on his way. Today, Vern works in a convenience store and runs a youth outreach program in Fort Smith. We rarely know where we are in the story of those we serve. Will the young man come back, do an intake, receive support and rebuild his life? We don't know. Will his life take a path similar to Vern's? We don't know. What we do know is that when we offer compassion in a good way, hope and dignity are restored and many amazing things become possible. - Chaplain John

## TRANSITIONAL HOUSING DOWNTOWN PROGRAM - OPENING

### MEETING THE NEEDS OF THE DOWNTOWN COMMUNITY

On August 31st, ECOH staff took the time to hold a Blessing Ceremony for the Transitional Housing Program downtown at the newly renovated Stepping Stone location. Rebecca Visscher performed a smudging ceremony and John Luth spoke a blessing. September 1st was the first day of intake and by September 4th intake numbers were at half capacity. To date, all program beds are full. Thank you to all of our downtown staff who have worked hard to get this program up and running and serving the downtown community.



## SHOUTOUT TO OUR KITCHEN STAFF!

On the HQCA Facility Based Continuing Care Family Experience Survey the ECOH kitchen score increased from 77% to an exceptional 88%. This ranking is above the Alberta average of 77%, We are honored to have such a great team serving our participants.



## ECOH TOWN HALLS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS



**MONDAY, OCTOBER 23 - GRACE VILLAGE**  
(include GVDT, Keystone and Cornerstone)  
Venue: GV Third Floor Training Rm C347  
Time: 2:00 - 3:00pm

**TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24 - GRACE MANOR**  
Venue: Common Room  
Time: 2:00 - 3:00pm

Come and congratulate our Service Recognition Award and ECOH Core Value Award Recipients. EFAP will be making a presentation to staff.

## FITNESS CHALLENGE

Join the ECOH staff Fitness Challenge - Challenge will be held for 2 weeks from October 8-21. All you have to do is form a Team of 4, Pick a team name, and appoint a Team Captain. Once you're ready, have your Team Captain register with Lydia.abraham@salvationarmy.ca Deadline for registration is September 29 at 4:30pm.

For more details, see the memo posted on the Staff Bulletin Board. Prizes given to the 1st, 2nd & 3rd place teams.



## STAFF SURVEY REMINDER

GOT A MINUTE? LET US HEAR YOUR THOUGHTS.



Surveys have gone out to all ECOH staff through Survey Monkey. Please share your thoughts, concerns and encouragement by completing the survey by October 13. Your input is valued!

## VOLUNTEER CORNER

**"Volunteering is at the very core of being human. No one has made it through life without someone else's help." - Heather French Henry**

Volunteers are vital to the successful execution of The Salvation Army - Edmonton Centre Of Hope work. In the last quarter (April 1-June 30, 2023), volunteers gave 1028.25 hours to ECOH. Twenty-five volunteers were actively giving during that time.

Check the ECOH website for new and exciting volunteer roles and openings or contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Novalee Toronchuk.

We are all working collaboratively toward a shared vision: **Give Hope Today**



## 2023 SALVATION ARMY INSPIRE CONFERENCE

This Spring, Laura Barber, a manager at Grace Manor and the HR Director, Alethia Lim, had the opportunity to attend the Inspire Conference in Toronto.

"The Conference & Congress was the best! We had such an amazing time meeting so many friendly, kind, amazing people from across the Country. Our days were jam packed with workshops, plenary sessions and mingling with one another. We had the opportunity to attend a Blue Jays baseball game at Rogers Center sponsored by TSA, We also attended the Skeleton Army performance. (This is a show performed by 2 actors. It was excellent, it brought tears to my eyes). Sunday service was held at Massey Hall. The energy in that Hall while we were all singing was tremendous! It was so uplifting and so incredible. On our free time, Aletheia and I went to the CN Tower, Ontario Museum, Casa Loma, the Eaton's Centre, out for dinner at a Japanese BBQ and walked along the waterfront. I am so grateful to have been part of Inspire 2023!"-Laura Barber



## WELCOME

**DONNY KROENING, DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONS**

**Originally from:** Canada  
**Canadian resident (since when?):** since the beginning  
**Studied:** Bachelor of Commerce at King's University. Completed first year of the Master of Architecture program before switching gears and going into construction as a General Contractor.  
**Work Experience:** Project Manager for two construction General Contractors (Delnor Construction & Synergy Construction).  
**Hobbies:** Camping, hockey and small DIY projects around the house.  
**Fun Facts:** I have three kids under 6 years old so life is a little out of control at the moment.



## WELCOME THQ IT

Welcome to our new IT staff who came to ECOH on contract from Territorial Headquarters.

If you see these faces, make sure to make them feel welcome. Until we transition from ShiftSupport to fully under THQIT service requests should be sent to saedm@shift.support. More information to follow in October.



Phil

Dennis



## NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

On Tuesday, September 26th ECOH invited Elder Harold Roscher to hold a Smudge Ceremony to honor First Nations, Inuit and Metis survivors and their families and communities and to commemorate their history and the legacy of residential schools. Games, Bannock, and tea were offered as a part the day's event.



## WELLNESS WEDNESDAYS



Just a reminder that we will be continuing with our Wellness Wednesday monthly connections. This is an opportunity to join team members in a meditation/relaxation session that promotes mental health. Our jobs take a lot out of us, and this time together is to allow you to release and refill. If you have not attended one of the sessions, please come and attend the one closest to your work location; however, you are free to come to any site, work schedule permitting. See you there.

Wednesday, October 18 , 2:30pm at Grace Village  
Wednesday, November 15, 2:30pm at Grace Manor

## WILSON AND FREDDY

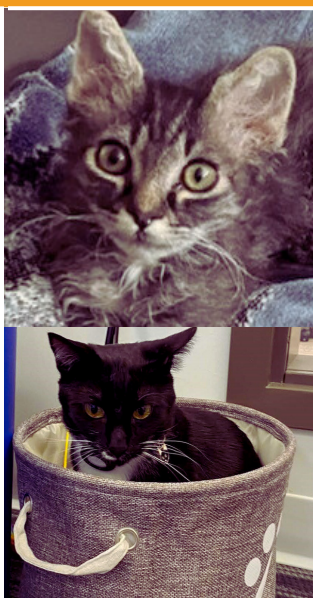
Please meet our newest pet therapy animals, Freddy and Wilson.

Freddy is living in the Supported Housing wing at Grace Village and is quickly making himself at home. He's already found his favorite sleeping spot - Susan's office chair.

Wilson has been at the Keystone Women's Recovery Centre since early this summer, joining participants in the Residential Recovery program.

Did you know that "purring not only releases endorphins in cats but can also induce the same thing in humans too. Endorphins help decrease stress hormone levels. Lowered stress hormones are helpful for healing, lowering blood pressure, and helping people cope with illness."

<https://www.inspirethemind.org/post/behind-cats-purrs-and-their-healing-power-sharing-the-benefits#>



## "THE DR. IS IN" - WITH DR. BOB

"As I was working in my office - charting, ugh, realized why cats hate laptops ..... They don't have a mouse - HAHA "  
Me-ow for now from Dr. Bob.



## WHO IS LIKE THE LORD?



This question is in one of the prayer-poems in the middle book of the Bible. (#113) The writer is talking about how amazing God is, how much God deserves to be praised. And then the question, 'who is like the Lord our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap'. The question expects the answer to be 'no one!'. That is, there is no one like God. Agreed. On one level. But I've been working here for six years by now and I've seen a lot of what we do as we all work together. Enough that I dare to say that every time any one of us leaves our comfortable home and gets our hands dirty and risks picking up wounds in our hearts by 'raising the poor from the dust' we are behaving, all of us together, 'like the Lord'. It sounds outrageous; yet, Jesus himself said, 'you are the salt of the earth, you are the light of the world'. Blessings to you, and love and respect for what you all (we all) do each day. Nothing short of being in the world like the Lord.

-John Luth, Spiritual Care Manager

## PATHWAY OF HOPE SILENT AUCTION

Oct 24, 25 & 26, 2023



Start your Christmas shopping early and bid on auction items in support of Salvation Army's Pathway of Hope. Our Silent Auction in the Spring raised over \$3700. Let's put ECOH on the SA Canada map by beating that!

Donations for auction items are welcome. Get creative! Theme baskets, gifts of time and service or baking (always a favorite) are just some ideas. More details and bid beacon app will be sent out closer to the date.

Please give generously so that the territorial goal of \$2.3 million will be reached.



## SANTA SHUFFLE

The Santa Shuffle fundraiser has been set for Saturday, December 2nd. All staff are invited to join the ECOH team in a fun and fit time raising funds for Salvation Army programs. More information to follow.

## TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALL GAME!

This summer, Keystone and Cornerstone program staff and participants headed to the ball field to challenge each other in a rousing game of baseball. There was much fun and high competition (and maybe a few injuries). Can't wait until next year's game!



# THE ECOH CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER 2023/ VOL 10



"The land fields its harvest; God, our God, blesses us." Psalm 67:6

My husband and I like to drive to places we haven't seen before in Alberta. The little hidden towns, over township roads, and into little crooks and crannies. Harvest Season is a beautiful time to do that. Last weekend we observed farmers working to finish their harvest, and visited a couple of the fresh produce markets that are dotted along the highway. This is one of my favorite times of year, a fresh reminder of the blessings of God, and all that I have comes from his hand, and it never ceases to amaze me what can come from a tiny seed, a bit of dirt and water. Such vibrant colors of vegetables and fruit come from a bland color of seed, really it is amazing. As the seasons change, and vibrant colors are on the leaves, I am reminded that in every season of life, God is present with me. Whatever hurdle of life I can see or perhaps not see and just hit front on (yup that does happen to me when I'm not paying attention) - God is holding me up, and it's a good thing.

Very soon now, we will be celebrating our Canadian Thanksgiving, and I want you to know how thankful I am for you, the staff body of the Edmonton Center of Hope. We are heading into the last quarter of the calendar year and upon reflection, it is remarkable how much we've accomplished together. We couldn't have done it without each other, and without the strength and wisdom of our heavenly father. I wish you well and pray God's blessing on you and your families. As we prepare for our next season and whatever that might bring, know this: There is nothing that will come our way that God doesn't already know about, and He will strengthen us to overcome and bless us when we rest in Him. I can hear something in the distance, ... Can you hear it?? "Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way...."

Major Elaine Bridger  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## STAFF APPRECIATION 2023

YOU'RE THE BEST!

Thank you to Dedo's Food Truck for the delicious Shawarma meal and to Bhoomi with Ananta for guiding and laughing with our staff in an afternoon of dance.

Thank you to all ECOH Staff. We have an amazing team!

