



# The RA Missive

APRIL 27, 2019

VOLUME 1, NUMBER 1

*Recovery Acres relies on funding from three branches of Provincial funding:*

1. *Alberta Health Services*
2. *Human Services*
3. *Alberta Infrastructure*

*We also rely on donations from generous supporters.*

*If you'd like to donate to our program you can contact us directly of donate through:*

Click here to  
**DONATE NOW**

## Notes from the ED

It is with great pleasure and honour (and a certain amount of stress) that I am able to wish you all the very best this holiday season and thank you all for taking the time to read our inaugural newsletter. Recovery Acres Society is always a very busy organization and working at RA is always a little bit crazy—this year even more than usual I think—but it is all well well worth it in the end.



The most exciting and significant news of 2017 is the addition of twenty transitional housing beds to our organization's portfolio. Due to the tremendous efforts of the late Murray Robson and the generosity of his family, Recovery Acres now operates four single detached homes in northeast Edmonton. Each house has five bedrooms where men graduating from treatment programs around the Province can live for up to two years while they work on their aftercare plans and eventually establish themselves in permanent housing situations. Alberta Health Services has been clear sighted and benevolent in supplying us with the funding necessary to properly run the Robson Houses and support the clients with a fulltime Community Transition counsellor and a House Manager. We are extremely grateful for their ongoing support.

The Highlands Community league has continued to grow into a very strong partner and supporter for our programs, helping us with housing opportunities, donations for clients and —most importantly—including our clients in community events as well as volunteer and employment opportunities. We hope that we are able to continue to build this relationship in 2018 and onward.

We are also thankful for so many other community facilities, government organizations and other forms of support that we work with closely with year-round. I can't mention all of them, but suffice it to say that Recovery Acres is just a humble part of a much larger continuum of care that exists here in Edmonton and around Alberta.



As this is the maiden newsletter and I promised myself that I would get it out before Christmas, I will save the Recovery Acres 2017 wrap-up for the next one. We have a very special piece from one of our staff and a poem from one of our clients to follow, so I will also keep my ramblings brief. We are hoping to send out newsletters three or four times a year moving forward, so please do provide any feedback, comments or content for future issues.

On behalf of the staff and clients here at Recovery Acres, I want to once again wish everyone a safe and joyful holiday season. Best wishes to you and your families.

Jeremiah Aherne, Executive Director

*Recovery Acres hosts many 12 step meetings that are open to the community:*

*Tuesday:  
AA – 8:00  
NA- 8:00*

*Wednesday:  
Opiates Anon. – 7:00*

*Thursday:  
Crystal Meth  
Anonymous – 7:30*

*Saturday, Sunday and  
holidays:  
NA – 1:00*

## Notes from the Board

Every year at this time, I find myself remembering and reflecting on how the year went at Recovery Acres month by month. Right from the beginning, straight through to present day, it's the people. People who have a passion and who have the creativity, patience, persuasion and perseverance needed to keep Recovery Acres thriving and growing. The evidence of all the work is clearly seen in its results.



This year has been filled to the brim with all kinds of different challenges and unique opportunities. I cannot help but stand in amazement of all the people who are involved and taking part in our success. The staff, clients, communities, the board, government...the list goes on. I speak for the entire Board of Directors when I say that Recovery Acres exists today because of all the people who have come over the years and who continue to partake in our passion, vision and mission.

This time of year tends to be a little stressful no matter how hard all of us try. Our staff is sincerely committed to providing our clients in crisis with the holiday they so deserve. I know many of you reading this message know how important our clients are and how much we all care for them. It is such a blessing to have so many of you as angels in their time of need. For all your hard work and dedication we thank you.

I am truly blessed to work with so many great people and want to thank each of our board members, our Executive Director and mostly our staff of professionals who make Recovery Acres such a special place.

As the holiday season approaches, it is important to take time to enjoy family, food, fun but most of all it's a time to remember the real reason for Christmas. On behalf of the board, I would like to wish all of you a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Merry Christmas,

Scott Saunders - Board Chair

## Notes from the staff

### Perspective -

**By Michael Schutz**

No sign reveals the building's purpose, yet the address tells him he's at the right place. It just looks like a regular low-rise apartment, not an addiction treatment centre. The only clue the building gives out is a flood of peculiar men who gather out front and smoke. A sea of feet beats down the grass, adding to the already worn path that leads to the side door.

He approaches the side door, where the men streamed out from. He grabs the once shiny door knob, having lost its lustre after hundreds of daily handshakes. A sign looks back at him from the door, asking him to clean his shoes if they're dirty. Hesitating, he questions the condition of his tattered boots. The flood of men starts to trickle past him as he stands in place. As they push the door open, he catches a glimpse of more signs hanging on the interior walls, undoubtedly screaming out more instructions about whatever is deemed necessary. He feels his palms start to sweat as he forms shaky fists. Shutting his eyes, he takes a deep breath, but the knot in his stomach tightens.

## What's a Missive?

### Definition of missive:

: a written communication

: a letter, especially a long or official one

*"The noun missive comes from the Latin word missus, meaning "to send." You may have heard the phrase, "fire off a missive," meaning a note, memo or dispatch that was written and sent with urgency and conveyed an important message."*



Shabby carpets greet inside the entrance, absorbing whatever the flood brings in. Times, rules, and schedules look back at him from postings on the wall. Various fonts display an assortment of regulations: some highlighted, some bold, some underlined, others italicized. His eyes wander down the scuffed linoleum stairs. From around the corner he can hear chatter, and the consistent drone of a laboring printer. Slow, cautious steps bring him down the stairs and towards the whirlpool of noise.

Bluish-grey paint encompasses the room like a cloudy day yearning to shed its gloom. The small office has no windows; the only sunlight dribbles in from adjacent rooms. The fluorescent lights give off an artificial glow, illuminating everything too clearly. He pulls his baseball cap down further over his eyes.

It had been over two weeks since he went through the withdrawal process. Despite that, he feels himself shaking when a woman invites him to sit. He feels his pulse start to race and his face flush. His eyes dart around the room, surveying the surroundings from behind the brim of his cap. He tries to take a breath, but the air feels thick like syrup. It was as though the windowless office was choking, and whoever was inside would suffocate along with it.

In the adjoined offices, he could hear keyboards clicking, papers being shuffled, more conversations. The woman that greeted him continued talk as well, but hardly any words made it into his ears. There was too much going on at once: forms were put in front of him to sign, a cup to urinate in was presented to him, a grey sweat suit was his to change into.

It was too much to take in at once.

Every corner, every drawer, every inch of closet space, full and closing in on him. Every room, every doorway, every phone line busy with chatter. He doubted if he could make this his home for the next six months.

The woman leads him upstairs into a small dorm room, where he's assigned a plastic mattress, still damp from disinfectant spray, and a wooden locker. He looks at the mattress and crummy locker. He shakes his head. It was the only personal space he had left in the world.

Next to him hang bland curtains, covering the window and the outside world. He looks around at the other three beds that accompany his in the converted apartment; his nearest neighbour is almost close enough to touch. A number is painted above each bed, all covered with standard white linens.

The woman leaves, giving him time to settle in. He throws the garbage bag containing all his belongings into his locker, then takes his sheets and tosses them across his bed. Exploring the rest of the dorm, he finds a small communal area. Plastered to the walls are a cleaning schedule, cleaning instructions, and cleaning checklist. His name has been assigned to Thursday. Further displays announce a myriad of other information: when to eat, when to sleep, when to wake up. Big, bold letters instructed that a positive attitude was of the highest importance.

Tears started to well up in his eyes.

Footsteps down the hall, footsteps from above, like the beat of an overbearing drum.

The hum of voices and laughter bounce through the halls and flood into the dorm. Although the sun is still up, he lies down on his bed; closing his eyes temporarily stops the onslaught of rules and regulations. As sleep starts to creep up, he asks himself if this place had truly been his only option.

When he opens his eyes, he sees the sun beaming in through the curtains. Silence resonates through the dorm at this early hour. His warm bed beckons him to stay, but he slowly creeps out of bed. He smiles as he surveys the room and sees his companions still rhythmically breathing, the rise and fall of their chests occasionally accompanied by a mild snore. Nearly five months had passed since his first day. The tight, smothering atmosphere had hugged him into health. Now he could see the clear skies promised beyond overcast walls.

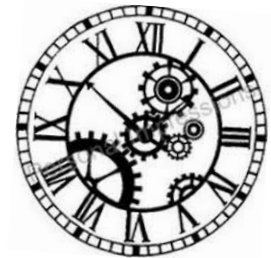


Tip-toeing out of the dorm, he makes his way downstairs to the coffee machine. Taking a deep breath, he listens to the house come alive, matching the rumble of coffeemaker. The floor above creaks with possibility, abundant and busy. Grabbing a broom, he cleans up the few coffee grounds that he'd dropped on the floor. The machine gives a final groan as he finishes his task. He pours himself a coffee and walks off, humming a tune.

Going slowly down the hall, he examines the flyers that advertise the latest sober dance or function. With straight posture and calm breath, he pauses by the main office. He smiles and waves at the night shift worker, who was nearing the end of his shift. More than once that worker had sat with him in the middle of the night while he shed tears and shared his thoughts: the walls absorbing his sobs, the floor catching his tears. He heads towards the stairs, always waiting to assist his ascent towards future endeavours. The thin, weathered carpet waits for him by the door, creased in the corners like numerous little smiles that escort him out and welcome him back in.

He heads outside, where the early rumbles of the house had emanated outwards; the rest of the world was stirring to life as well. Looking back from the street, he sees the signless, low-rise apartment that he calls home. A big smile spreads across his face as tears start to form. His thoughts creep to his future. He will be moving out this week and onto the next phase of his journey.

Turning to the east, he closes his eyes, breaths deep, and lets the light from the sunrise wash over him.



## Notes from the clients

### I am a clock

By Robert Douchet

I am a clock, the keeper of time  
Always moving forward, no reason or rhyme  
I have two hands that tell a story  
Can be good or bad and sometimes gory

You can see my face, plain to see  
But my inner workings are a mystery  
I can be big or small, even tucked away  
Though I may not want, I'm seen every day

The story I tell is of this actual moment  
You can't see my past, an important component  
I am a clock, and need tending to  
I can bring you joy, disappointment too

I can move fast or slow, seem like I'm standing still

Can be for you or against you, sometimes test your will  
I am a clock and will do my job  
I am more than this, my name is Robb

### Picture Gallery

Recovery Acres goes to Vertically Inclined climbing gym as part of our Life Skills program. The clients learn teambuilding, problem solving and trust building exercises (as well as have a lot of fun).



### How to Reach Us



Recovery Acres  
6329 118<sup>th</sup> Ave  
Edmonton, AB T5W 1G2  
PH# 780-471-2996  
FAX 780-477-1578  
[info@recoveryacresedmonton.org](mailto:info@recoveryacresedmonton.org)  
[www.recoveryacresedmonton.org](http://www.recoveryacresedmonton.org)

Click here to  
**DONATE NOW**