



Volume 6 Issue 6 2009



**Ed Lavelle (elder)
Ryan Arcand
Dave Ward.**
With tent from the
Native Friendship
Centre at ...

Homeless Connect Edmonton

Story on page 8

Vendors pay 50 cents per paper

Community Groups that offer Meals

1. Bissell Centre

10527-96 Street - 423-2285
Monday to Friday - 9:30 a.m.
- sandwiches

Friday - 9:45 a.m. - sandwiches

3. Inner City Pastoral Ministry

at The Bissell Centre - 424-7652
Snacks after Sunday Service
- 12:00 to 1:00

4. Christ Church

12116-102 Avenue - 488-1118
Every 3rd Saturday - 5:00 p.m. meal

5. Herb Jamieson Centre

10014 -105A Avenue - 429-3470
For men not on assistance
Monday to Friday 7:00 to 7:45 a.m. breakfast
12:00 - 12:45 p.m. - lunch
5:00 to 5:45 p.m. - supper
Weekends 11:00 - 11:45 a.m. - breakfast
4:00 - 4:45 p.m. - supper

6. Hope Mission - 422-2018

Daily 7:00 to 7:45 - breakfast
Noon - lunch
5:00 to 6:45 - supper

7. House of Refuge Mission

10339-95 Street
Daily - 8 p.m. - meal

8. Marian Centre

10536-98 Street - 424-3544
Daily except Wednesdays
12:00 to 12:45 p.m. meal
Closed from the 27th of each month to the 1st

8. The Mustard Seed

10635-96 Street - 426-5600
Monday to Friday - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. supper
Saturday - 5 p.m. - supper
Zero tolerance of alcohol

10. Operation Friendship

9526-106 Avenue - 429-2626
Monday to Friday - 9:00 a.m. - breakfast
Monday to Sunday - 12 noon - lunch
5:00 p.m. - supper

For seniors over 55 only

11. Red Road Healing Centre - 471-3220

Friday - 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. - soup and bannock

12. Salvation Army

9620-101 Avenue - 429-4222
Fridays - 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m. - breakfast

13. St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran Church

9606-110 Avenue - 426-1122
Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, 7:00
a.m. Breakfast

14. St. Faith's Anglican Church -

parish hall
11725-93 Street - 477-5931
Thursday - 12:00 noon - soup
Saturday - 8:30 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. - breakfast
3rd Friday of the month - 7:00 p.m. - supper

15. Emmaus Church

5015- 144 Avenue - 275-1647
Monday - 4:45 to 6:00 p.m. - meal

16. Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre

9611-101A Avenue - 423-5302
Meals for women staying at the shelter.
If not, bag lunch is given

17. Edmonton Orthodox Reformed Church

1161- 95 A Street - 479-1860
Thursdays, 6:25 p.m. soup

18. Robertson Wesley United Church

10209-123 Street 482-1587
Second Saturday of each month
January to November, 5:00 p.m. meal

19. Jasper Place Health and Wellness Centre

15210 - Stoney Plain Road - 481-4001
Mondays - 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. - meal

20. One Accord Bible Fellowship Church

10802 - 93 Street - 425-6310
Saturdays, 10:00 to 1:00 p.m. meals

Have you witnessed an act of violence against a homeless person, or been homeless, and a victim of violence?

If so, please fill out the form below and return to Edmonton Street News, 9533-106A Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta, T5H 0S9

Name of person or persons involved (if known) _____

Date _____ Time _____ Where did the incident occur _____

What happened _____



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EDMONTON STREET NEWS

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Code of Ethics

Edmonton Street News reserves the right to refuse publication of any article and or ad at the discretion of the board of Edmonton Street News Society.

We will not trivialize poverty in any way.

We practice sound journalism with respect to FOIP legislation and respect for the privacy of the persons portrayed in stories and photographs.

The views presented in this publication are those of the writers.

Not all homeless are in the alleys



Too often when the word "homeless" is voiced, the image that readily comes to mind is of the "street people", those who live outside on the street, drinking and using drugs, seen hanging out in small groups, lying surrounded by garbage in the back alleys. Because they are so highly visible, some have achieved almost celebrity status from being photographed by the media, interviewed, documented, and asked to represent the face of homelessness at conferences and in classrooms. A number of them have been homeless for years, with a few weeks or months of housing which terminates due addiction, mental illness or both. Many would benefit from programs like that at the Urban Manor (see story on pages 4-5), where they have the support needed to maintain housing and to live with dignity.

These highly visible individuals comprise only a portion of the total number of homeless in Edmonton, but because they are so obvious and their behaviour so unacceptable, this leads to an unbalanced picture of the face of homelessness. If the only people in our city, who were homeless, were the ones we see passed out on dirty mattresses in the alley, or the ones we would like to avoid when they approach us on the street panhandling for money for more beer and drugs, we might well say, "Why bother?" There are shelters where they can sleep when the weather turns cold - WEAC, Hope Mission/Herb Jamieson, and the George Spady Centre, albeit not enough.

But these are not the only homeless people in our city.

As Schultz points out, there are pre school children that are homeless. There are homeless mothers with children, homeless

fathers with children, immigrants struggling to continue going to work every day, students who cannot afford their rent, seniors, office workers sneaking into their office after hours to sleep, people living in cars, and many couch surfers, staying a few days, weeks or months with friends and relatives. All are as homeless as the addict in the alley, but we can pass them on the street and never realize their need.

Last summer I met a couple living in a tent in the river valley with two children that they sent to school every morning. They tried to maintain as normal a life as possible, but lived in fear that their situation would be brought to the attention of the social services and the family would be split up because there are no shelters in Edmonton where a family can be maintained intact. Once the situation is known, the father may be sent to the Herb Jamieson, the mother to WEAC, and the children to foster care until housing is found. An alternative, sometimes used, is to place the family in a hotel or motel.

We cannot overlook the obvious need of the chronically homeless street person, but we must make more effort to meet the needs of the equally homeless person who is not as visible. Investing in shelter that strengthens the family unit, keeping it intact while dealing with the stress of homelessness, should be considered an investment into the future. Otherwise, that child, after being bounced around from foster home to foster home, may well end up as the next generation on the street.

We must ask, is the current shelter system there to provide peace of mind so we don't have to look at that person lying on the street, and our city looks cleaner and safer, or meeting the real need for every homeless person. When dealing with homelessness, out of sight out of mind is just not good enough.

By Linda Dumont

Neglected investment - the hidden faces of homelessness



An experience on Tuesday May 19 reinforced to me how tragically unwise we as a society are in our treatment of our most valuable citizens who have the most potential for good and evil - our pre-school children.

At 8 p.m. Tuesday a young lady by the name of Sherry was pushing her two year old son, Ashton in a carriage. When she saw me, recognizing me as a street pastor, she asked for directions to the Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC). We made several phone calls from a pay phone and were told that WEAC and the Hope Mission do not accept children, but all of the other shelters that do, including the YMCA, were full.

Bev, from Emergency Social Services, was not empathic to the woman's dilemma, but critical of her being stuck in this situation, homeless on the street with her son. According to Sherry several people in her apartment had been kicked out because of someone not paying the rent. All day she had been with her dad looking for a place to stay. He was safe in Hope Mission, but she and her son were without shelter.

By now all three of us were freezing after several more unfruitful phone calls. We decided to warm up in the police station. They had no advice for the two of them either, but at least we were able to warm up and the baby could be changed into a clean diaper.

When the police station closed at 10 p.m. I called a cab even though I couldn't afford it (thank God for Visa) and let them sleep on some blankets in my small bachelor suite. Sherry and her son were grateful to have a peaceful warm place to sleep.

I couldn't believe it that Edmonton social services wanted the pair to take the long trip

to Camrose, after 10 p.m., because all of the Edmonton shelters that accept children were full.

The whole situation made me question how much we actually value young children, and how much we are helping the poorest in our society - the single parent mothers. I am deeply concerned that Christians are doing so little to protect and help these children while adults have a number of options for overnight shelter. I've phoned various agencies and churches and found that not very much besides Sunday School is being done to help poor pre-school children and their mothers. Please pray that more help will be made available in this critical area of need. The investment of time and money would be more than recovered in the future.

By Pedro Schultz

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Sex Trade and Worker's Rights Advocate

About one hundred activists, sex trade workers and community members gathered in a small hall at the Ukrainian Cultural Center just off of 97th street April 29, 2009. The topic: "Decriminalization of the Sex Trade." Presenter Maxine Duggan of the Erotic Service Providers Union out of San Francisco boldly led the discussion and seminar.

Duggan began advocating for the rights of erotic services providers twenty years ago when she was out rightly angered by the lack of sex worker's rights and lack of work done in the area of de-criminalization in San Francisco. She included many examples of exploitation of workers. For example, the exploitation of workers by owners and bosses of strip clubs who force employees to perform sexual acts on them and by the police force in San Francisco who were not consistent in enforcing laws and providing safety for street level workers. She stated there needs to be an end to inconsistency in follow through with law enforcement and that, "All prostitution laws are arbitrary." A round of applause followed this comment from a captivated audience.

Duggan advocated that there need be a safe place for dialogue for street workers and promoted the unionization of the sex trade. In San Francisco there is a law entitled Pandering which makes a person guilty of a felony if s/he accepts earnings or gifts from someone who is making their base earnings from the sex trade. A person therefore such as a landlord, vendor or even a worker's children are technically innocently guilty of a felony through accepting the transaction of funds or gifts from the worker. In a sense Duggan suggested that laws against prostitution, "Criminalize relationships." The crowd was drawn in.

However in a small corner of the room I



Maxine Duggan of the Erotic Service Providers Union
Photo Brittney White

was left unsettled. I saw the drawn back familiar faces of a few ex-street workers from Edmonton who will remain unnamed. Commencing the dialogue I approached the two women who I instinctively felt had another view. I looked in their eyes and could see the dismay and lack of justice. The inquiries I had about the unionization of workers and rights would most definitely be approached from a different view. I asked the women about what they thought of the dialogue in general. Immediately one replied, "She talks as if because we are good at what we do, that we want to be on the street. What percentage of women actually wants to be in this indus-

try? Not many. I have never met one- why have a union for people who do not want to do what they are doing?"

I then asked, "What do you think having a safe place to talk about your rights and formation of a union." The response, "How is a damn union card going to protect me from a twisted man who picks me up and wants to kill me anyway?." We exchanged stories and abuses of the street system. The conclusion the two women came up with was that the unionization of street workers promotes an unfavoured system. "It should never be an option for a child- or a grown woman to do this sort of work," said one. Although the presenter and ex-workers shared consistency in the definition of the worth and dignity of a woman or man involved in the sex trade, two very different views emerged from the dialogue.

As I was beginning to pack up, one of the two women said to me, "Just remember there is an expiry date on women, a union will not protect the child who is standing on the streets next to the 50 year woman with a union card. The child will get picked up." We all chuckled- at base level- but there is a gruesome underlying truth to the statement. There need be work done in the area of de-criminalization- yes- but one must also understand and work with the histories and psychological involvement and supports required to help those who have "DECIDED," to work on the streets as most of the time it is forced labour rather than labour without advocated rights. The dignity and worth of a person is not instilled with ing rights per say, but rather out of a drastic re-thinking of what constitutes human value and worth.-- Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that..

Brittney White

Comment and a conversation on homelessness



Allan Sheppard

Allan Sheppard is a freelance writer and editor, and a volunteer writer for Edmonton Street News. As a pensioner, he finds himself from time to time on the edge of poverty and homelessness. As a self-appointed community elder, he thinks and worries about the needs of children, youth, parents and others who face lives of poverty and inadequate education in the midst of unprecedented wealth.

Urban Manor stands out as a clean, well-designed and well-maintained building in one Edmonton's less inviting areas. A trashy scrap-metal yard, an empty warehouse (in better days home to the sadly departed Theatre 3, then to a rough-and-ready low-rent neighbourhood bar), a bottle depot, and LRT tracks lie to the north. The old and notorious York Hotel (the signs over the beer room doors prohibit knives) is at the other end of the block to the west. The Boyle Street Community Hall houses an inner city education program in a small park across the street to the south, hardly an urban oasis, but a precious green space in a blighted area.

Urban Manor's building is only seven years old, so it is still new. It is obviously cared for and respected by its tenants. That impression is maintained inside the front door. The lobby is plain and unpretentious, but clean and well-maintained; it is busy but quiet and relaxed. The place seems to live up to its motto: It's not the Ritz, but it's home.

On May 6, I met for an hour with Linda Noel, Urban Manor's executive director, and Michele Dowling, its case work manager. That was not my first visit. I had dropped by Urban Manor on two previous occasions, for business with a resident, so I had some observations that I could use to evaluate

Urban Manor: A home for men who have no home

responses to my questions.

I was impressed with what I saw and heard. Noel and Dowling speak articulately and passionately about Urban Manor, about what they do there and why they do it. Someone more cynical than I might say that's to be expected: they make good livings doing what they do, and it's only self-interest for them to put their work in its best light. Perhaps, but I found it easy to take them at face value. Both struck me as intelligent, competent professionals who could earn as much or more working for government, in the private sector, or a large non-profit organization, all of which would offer more security and fewer potential risks.

Noel and Dowling speak from experience with authority and sincerity about an important aspect of complex housing and homelessness challenges. I have transcribed, condensed, and edited our conversation so they can speak, as much as possible, in their own voices. They have important things to say. They should be heard.

Linda Noel Urban Manor originated in 1982, when it was called Urban House. It came out of the Marian Centre, which is a Roman Catholic institution, but it does not have a religious mission or affiliation.

We still follow the original mandate. We are a home for hard-to-house men that have exhausted all other options. They've been evicted from shelters, boarding houses, what have you, and have nowhere else left to go. If we can't house them, no one can house them.

The majority of our residents have little or no family contact. They come from the streets, through referrals from hospitals, institutions, word of mouth.

We take them under the influence. This is where we are different from other agencies, with the exception of one downtown shelter that takes them overnight. Our men are here full-time. They live here. This is their home.

A lot of our guys have dual diagnoses: mental health, alcohol, drugs. They all have

serious addictions.

Our main objective is harm reduction. These fellows are victims on the street. They can't fend for themselves. When they have a bottle, a beer, or five dollars in their pocket, if someone wants it from them, they'll get it. Their defence mechanism is nil.

We allow them to have beer, only beer. Consumption is controlled by us. There is a limit to what they can bring in, and there is a limit to what they can drink here. When we feel they have had enough, then that's it.

They leave their beer at the office, and they're only allowed to have six cans at a time. They are given one beer at a time, and they have to drink it on the patio. Alcohol is not allowed outside the patio and the main office. Drugs are not allowed anywhere in the building or on the property.

We are always full, and we have a very small turnover. Some fellows have been here for 14 years.

There is not a time limit on how long they can stay. If we feel that they have the ability to fight their addiction and go out and be productive, we'll encourage it, and some will move on. But if they want to stay, they can stay.

Edmonton Street News When you say that the men who come here have nowhere else to go, who makes that judgement?

Michele Dowling We do. A lot of times they are very forthright. Their time is up at the shelters, they can't stay there any more. They are looking for something more than a mat on the floor. Or they've been evicted over and over again from group homes and rooming houses.

Mental health workers will phone and advocate for patients. Psychiatrists will phone. We get referrals from hospitals. They all know there is no point in sending these men to a group home, because it won't work. We provide a unique service.

The men are brutally honest about why

Continued on page 4

Urban Manor: A home for men who have no home

Continued from page 3

they come here. They're not proud of themselves. But they know this is a place that will respect them and won't judge them. Everybody is called by name here. It's a very personal, homey environment—or as much as it can be in a facility with 75 beds.

ESN You don't push anyone out the door. Can they be evicted?

LN If there is physical violence toward staff or another resident, they're automatically out. I have a zero tolerance for that. Stealing is also unacceptable.

We don't have a lot of rules, but the ones we have, we enforce. We look at ourselves as a family here. That means everyone has to get along.

Our guys are compliant. When they come here, they know there is nowhere else to go. The last thing they want to do is lose their bed.

And they know we all care about them. Whether it's a mental health issue or a physical injury, addictions, doctor's appointments, dentist's appointments, whatever they need, we try to accommodate them.

ESN You also dispense their medication.

LN That's part of the rules for staying here too. If you are on a medication, you take that medication, or you don't stay here. We manage that.

The pharmacist comes once a week. She meets with the guys, if there are issues with their medication, and she works very closely with the nurse practitioner from the Boyle McCauley Health Centre.

We try to keep prescription drugs off the street. We only have a week's worth of medication on hand. The guys aren't even allowed to have Tylenol in their rooms. Everything has to be turned in at the med room. It's all signed for. It's all theirs. But in this kind of environment you can't have medication in the rooms, because who knows who might walk in and grab it?

ESN Who pays for your service?

LN We're primarily funded through the provincial government: Housing and Urban Affairs. We also rely greatly on donations: monetary donations, clothing, food. We are non-profit.

ESN Do residents pay?

MD If they have an income, we ask \$450 a month for room and board. That covers everything. We provide three meals a day and three snacks a day. If they're going to work, we provide them a bag lunch. We provide all their bedding and clothing, and any kind of personal hygiene item that they might need. We give haircuts. Anything they could need, we do it here, or we find somebody that will do it.

We also advocate for them in court. We go with them when they get tickets, which they do all the time: drinking in public, public intoxication. The cops give them a ticket; we go in, speak with the prosecutor, and get the ticket bumped into fine option. The guys work their fines off here.

We really encourage them to follow through on court appearances, because those fines follow them around, wherever they go. It may be just a \$200 ticket, but it doesn't go away. We will go with them and walk them through it all, unless they want to go alone.

LN We make them accountable for what they do. It gives them a better perspective on what responsibility is all about.

MD Don't think that these guys come here and, because they're alcoholics, we just let them drink. There are certain responsibilities for living here, and we encourage them to own up to their responsibilities. They have to keep their own areas clean; if they can't then we help them. But we make them accountable.

ESN You make them accountable, but you also help them, if they need help.

MD It's incredible what happens, sometimes. One of our guys stumbled across the road, and the police gave him a \$250 jay-walking ticket. He could never pay that fine without help, so we help with fine options. But we try to do the right thing and follow

through in court as much as we can. So far, the guys have always worked off their fine options. I think it's important to them too, because everybody's got a sense of pride.

LN There are times that we have to enforce tough love here. But the guys have a well-grounded respect for us. They can be madder than hell at us one day, and the next day they're so apologetic. They understand our reasons.

ESN Do they have incomes?

MD Yes, some of them. AISH. Temporary jobs. Prime Staffing and Bissell Centre Employment are close by. A lot of the guys go out at six o'clock in the morning and wait for jobs. The ones that do get work give us 25 per cent of what they make towards their room and board.

The ones that don't have any money contribute in other ways. They help clean windows. They do dishes or sweep floors. They want to contribute. This is their home. They help because they want to, not because they have to.



Linda Noel, Urban Manor's executive director, and Michele Dowling, its case work manager.

We are their family. We look after them, and in their way, they look after us.

ESN You mentioned a rec room. Do you have a recreation program?

MD Not really. Recreation is hard with these guys. We've got TV. We play ball every week, across the street. A few guys will show up. A number of them go swimming on Thursdays. With our limited funds, it's difficult to access a lot of stuff. I spend a lot of time begging for free passes.

Some of the men are quite cerebral. They do a lot of reading. A lot of crossword puzzles. That kind of stuff.

LN We'll have movie nights. Bingo, where they can win little bags of tobacco, which to them is a big thing. It doesn't take a lot to make them happy. But for outside recreational activity, we're limited.

ESN Is there an average age for the men?

MD Early fifties. But more and more young guys are coming in, guys in their thirties. They come in not so much for addiction to alcohol, but to the drugs.

ESN Do you know why?

MD They have mental health issues. I'm not sure if those issues came before the addiction or if the addiction became part of their mental health situation. But having to deal with them here, I think that they're just too much for their family to handle. I don't think there are supports out there for families to deal with this kind of addiction. It's all-encompassing. It's horrible. Families run out of options, because these guys will do anything they can for that drug.

ESN Some people reading this might say what you're doing is futile. It's a hopeless situation. Why bother? Why do this? Why should the government spend money on men who may be beyond rescuing?

LN They still matter. Every single fellow here has had something horrific happen to him. A death in the family that they couldn't deal with. Sexual abuse. We hear some sad stories here. Unfortunately, turning to drugs and alcohol was their escape. Then their addictions became larger than them, and they couldn't cope.

We've got fellows in here that have tried over and over again to get clean. But some-

thing will happen. They have very low coping skills. Something that you or I may not think is a big deal, to them is overwhelming. And the only escape they know is in a bottle.

MD None of these guys, in their high school yearbook said, "I want to live in a homeless shelter when I'm 40." They all had dreams. They all had aspirations. They're incredible people with incredible stories. They've had incredible lives. They are valuable human beings.

Just because they made some wrong decisions or life has thrown them situations that they couldn't deal with doesn't mean that they're not worthy. They're more worthy. These are people that need to be cared for. The way we treat them speaks of what kind of society we are.

LN Each of us is just one wrong turn away from ending up like these guys. This is where being non-judgmental and actually listening to these guys—not just listening, but actually hearing what they have to say—is so important.

I totally understand why a lot of them have not been able to beat the addiction. Some of them don't want to. They have accepted the fact that this is how they are: "I'm 50 years old. I've lost everything. I've lost my family. I haven't seen my children in 20 years; they want nothing to do with me. The only friends or family I have is within these walls and that bottle."

That's it. That's all they've got. They accept it. But they still matter.

There was a story in the news about a fellow in Winnipeg that jumped into the river to save a kid. He was a homeless person. He didn't think he had done such a heroic thing. And the only thing that he said about it was don't judge us by how we look.

Homeless people had dreams, family, friends. Something happened in life to them to put them where they are. But don't judge them because their clothes are a little dirty or they've got a shopping cart that has their whole life in it.

MD They're amazing people. I'm grateful every day I come to work. The men are genuinely happy to see me. Even if they are in trouble for something, they know it's because we care about them.

I come here every single day and know that I make a difference to somebody. Even handing out a smoke to someone who doesn't have one, or helping him with a phone call he has dreaded making. Or anything. It's not hard to please them. They're very grateful for the smallest kindness.

They absolutely deserve it. I'm reminded of that every day.

A couple of years ago my husband and I bought a new car. My friends said, "You can't drive that new car down to work; are you crazy?" I told them my car is safer at work than it is in my own driveway. And it is. There are 75 pairs of eyes in this building that keep an eye on it. My car was broken into on my driveway. It's never been touched here.

The men know what time I get to work in the morning, and I get in trouble from them, if I'm late: Where have you been? We were worried about you. What do you mean you took yesterday off?

LN We are their family. We look after them, and in their way, they look after us.

MD I've said it many times: we're probably the most dysfunctional family you'll ever meet, but we're a family, and we're all very proud of that fact. We have 30 staff members. Some of them have been here over 20 years.

ESN Should there be more Urban Manors? Do you meet the need?

LN No, no way. Not even close. We turn away people every day.

MD We could probably fill four Urban Manors. And there could be one for women.

LN Twenty per cent of the hard-to-house population are women. Where do they go? Eighty per cent of them are men. But there is that 20 per cent of women that have nowhere to go.

MD The city and the province have their

ten-year plans to end homelessness. That's good. There are homeless people out there that fit their mandate. They'll be housed, and housed successfully. But there is a percentage out there—it doesn't matter where you put them—that don't have the life skills and the coping skills to manage on their own. And that's why we need places like this.

ESN What about the housing first model that the city and the province have embraced in their plans? Are you saying that there are men and women, who are not candidates even for that?

MDNone of our guys would work in that model. They just wouldn't. They need around-the-clock care. Not always hands-on care, but there needs to be supervision in place with our guys.

ESN One of the criticisms of the housing first model, at least in Toronto, is that it often takes people from the downtown core, puts them out in the suburbs, and leaves them there.

MDEverything our guys need is downtown. All their supports are here. All their friends are here. To take them and stick them somewhere else, that's just horrible.

ESN There are people in the community—I've talked with some of them—who say that part of the problem with homelessness is that their services are concentrated in one area where their clients can overwhelm neighbourhoods. You're saying that concentrating services downtown is natural. It's inevitable and necessary.

MDAbsolutely, because the lifestyle that homeless people lead is not tolerated in many areas.

I went to a community meeting in near here. Residents were concerned about prostitutes and activity on 118th Avenue. They were willing to do anything to get rid of the problem. They didn't care where the problem went. They just didn't want it in their neighbourhood. That attitude really upset me. They don't want to solve the problem. They just don't want to have to look at it.

Whereas, we know what the problem is here. We see it every day, and we deal with it every day. We deal with it successfully. Most neighbourhoods wouldn't tolerate somebody in the back alley drinking or urinating on a power pole. It's tolerated here, in Boyle-McCauley. Nobody thinks it's a good thing, but it is tolerated here, and these guys are not harassed as much.

Can you imagine putting our guys in Riverbend? The calls police would have to respond to, just because some guy was on his way home from the liquor store and fell asleep in the back alley? Here, we check on people and make sure they're okay. We don't call the police unless there is a good reason.

ESN If you could be housing minister Yvonne Fritz—or Mayor Mandel—for a day, or a week, or a month, what would you do?

MDI would probably build at least four more Urban Manors, one of them for women.

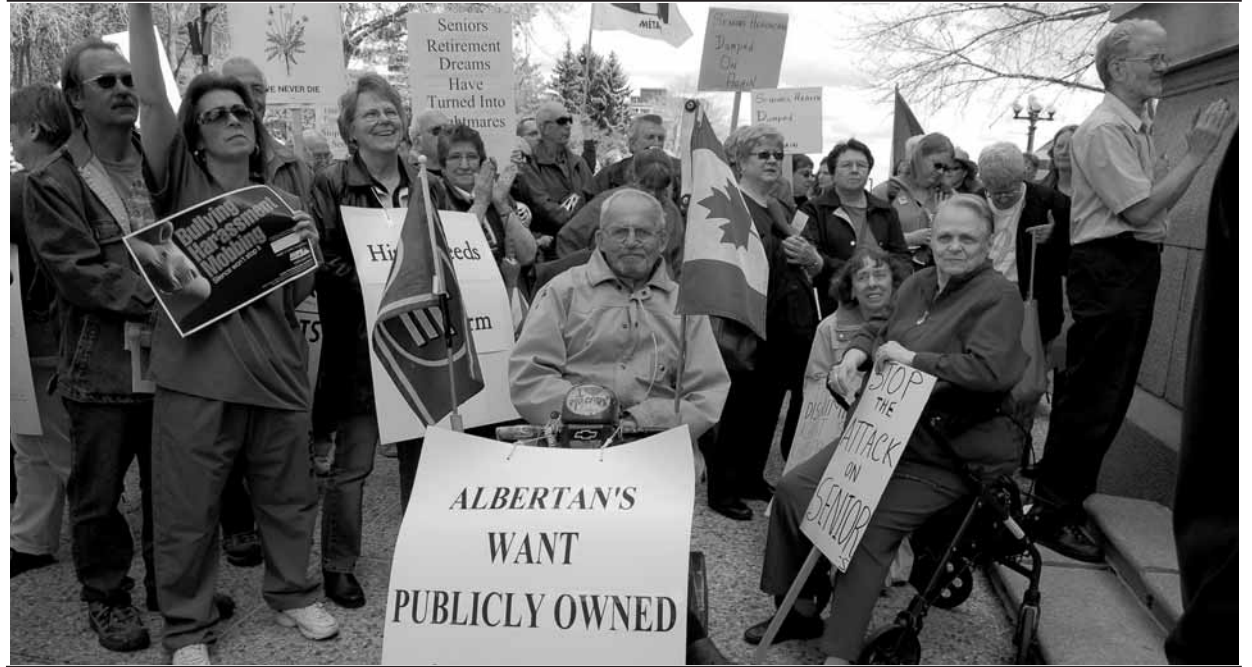
LN That would be first and foremost. Because there is a population out there that needs more than transitional help. Supportive housing is wonderful, for the ones that fit that mandate; our guys don't. That's why they're here. They have not been able live on their own. For whatever reason they've been put out from their family and friends. Supportive housing is only going to work for them if it is implemented 24/7, and that's what we do.

MDIt's not so much protecting them from themselves, but from everybody else, because

Dear Allan Sheppard

Just read your section in the most current issue of ESN. I could not stop thinking about a paragraph I read last night in a book I am currently reading, Right Relationship-Building a Whole Earth Economy by Peter Brown and Geoffrey Garver. I am sure this book would be of much interest to someone like you, it is one of the best books I have read that serves to inspire and help solve social injustices. From page 87 of this book I quote "most of the 27 nations in the EU, for example, with it's 500 million citizens- basic human rights are for the most part adequately protected, and the bulk of the population in those places, even the poor are guaranteed adequate subsis-

Healthcare Rally



Over 1000 people rallied at the Legislature on May 9 to demand that Alberta's healthcare be kept public and to protest the delisting of medical procedures. Those in attendance included a large number of seniors as well as many people from outside Edmonton. Photos by Paula Kirman

they are victims. These guys are marks, and so many in this neighbourhood see them as that. Our guys do not go out after dark. They know better. They're home by eight o'clock every night.

ESN You mentioned harm reduction. You talked about reducing the harm these men do to themselves or that they are exposed to. What about the potential harm to the community that they may represent? You say they aren't violent, but most people feel intimidated by them, or repelled; they avoid certain areas, like this one. They walk cross the street to avoid getting too close to homeless people, or people who look like they are homeless. Does the idea of harm reduction also apply to the neighbourhood and to ordinary people in the community?

MDAbsolutely. We are reducing the harm to the neighbourhood and the community. Our guys are not in your back alley drinking or having seizures. They're not breaking into your garage because they need somewhere warm to sleep. They have a home, and they come home.

Our guys are not bringing a criminal element into the neighbourhood. There's a certain amount of the criminal element that gets in here; we know that. But I think we deter that more than encourage it.

LN The police department recognizes that. Many times, we've had constables tell us wonderful things about what we do and how much they appreciate us. We help cut their work load.

We recognize and deal with health issues right here at home. Our guys are not clogging up emergency rooms, causing EMS calls, or wasting police department time. We deal hands-on with most issues ourselves, so that the police department and EMS can be out there taking care of more serious issues.

Harm reduction works both ways. Our guys need us. The community needs us too.

(And maybe, just maybe, Linda Noel and Michele Dowling seem to imply, the community might one day discover that it needs the men who live in Urban Manor too—if only it would take the time to listen, really listen, to them.—AS)

tence and health protection." That is the paragraph I had to go home to get and bring to the library so I could forward it to you. My thoughts are the EU do a much better job generally on social justice issues than we in North America, and Canada. So if we can learn from them on how they deal with poverty, it might be of interest to you. I hope this information is helpful.

I have made it a point to buy every issue of ESN since I discovered it almost a year ago, sometimes two copies if I can manage it with my meager income. The extra copies, and mine, when I am done, I leave in a public place or pass on to a friend. I also make it a point to buy from a lot of different vendors that I see.

Regards, Peter

International Workers' Day



An Urban Manor wish list

You mentioned donations. What do you need?

Michele Dowling

We always need money. We need a van. Our van is falling apart, literally. And that van is crucial. We go to the Food Bank twice a week with it. We take our guys to and from hospital. We take them to doctor's appointments. We're having a heck of a time replacing it.

And food: we always need fresh fruit and vegetables. We don't just feed our guys to fill their bellies. We feed them properly. A lot of research went into how to feed them and what to feed them. We've had dieticians from the University of Alberta come in and volunteer their time. The Canadian Diabetes Association has worked with us. Our guys have very bad teeth, so we don't serve them anything that they have to chew a lot.

Everything that we do here is based on what these guys need, not what's easiest for us or most convenient. These guys need high-protein diets. They need high-calcium diets. They need low sodium. They're alcoholics with bad digestive systems, so we have to be careful about tomatoes and high-acid stuff. We're looking for the most nutritious stuff we can get our hands on. Basically the men want meat and potatoes.

Linda Noel

We need clothing. Some things we're always short of: jeans, footwear.

Michele Dowling

We have one guy that walks from here to the West End every day. He gets a shopping cart and fills it for the bottle depot on the way back. He's usually hits the depot about four o'clock. He puts on a lot of miles.

A lot of guys walk to the South Side. Their shoes take a real beating.

There's a lot of diabetes in this population, because they haven't been eating properly for so long and the alcohol that they drink. They can have serious foot problems, because of the diabetes. So proper footwear is always needed.

Contact information for Urban Manor
Address: 9524 104 Avenue NW,
Edmonton, AB T5J 0J2
Telephone: 780 425-5901
Web site: urbanmanor.net

Confrontation with Edmonton Police Service

I was stopped by two uniformed police constables in a marked cruiser after eight p.m. Friday May 8/2009 in an alley between 83 and 84 Avenue and 106 Street. It started out pleasantly enough, however then blonde female officer started asking nosy questions besides my name, d.o.b and address. What am I doing in the alley?. (I had my new mountain bike complete with it's front suspension fork-front disc brake and aluminum frame and had stopped to retrieve many text messages on my five month old Motorazr 2 mobile on the Virgin mobile network from a good friend of mine whom drives a lorry for a living on the motorways for Arnold bros.) When asked for my telephone number I asked the constable, who did all of the talking, why I should give this to her?. We both had smiles on our faces that didn't quite reach our eyes (insincere) and this continued throughout our conversation, our poker face expressions not giving anything away when we weren't glaring at each other daring the other to drop dead. Her answer was that it didn't matter now.

"Ever been in trouble with the police?" My reply was "I've' been a Human Rights Advocate for nine years, so, no I have never been in trouble with the police". My reply was cold. Did I detect a flicker of fear on her face when I mentioned what I do for work? I hoped so.

"We're just getting to know people in the neighbourhood," she said.

"Why, you witch,,I've heard that tired line before," I thought.

The constable and I knew this was becoming confrontational as our body language told all. "I don't like you rolling your eyes at me" she said coldly. What she thought was rolling my eyes wasn't true.

"I don't think I like your line of questioning, constable," I replied.

"I could arrest you," came her reply.

"On what charge? rolling my eyes? Not giving you my mobile phone number? Not playing your sick little game of intimidation?" I thought but said nothing. I felt like chuckling coldly. "Do I perceive that as a threat, constable?" I asked.

"No," she said. Her parting words were. "We'll be seeing a lot of each other".

"I look forward to it.," I said as they drove off.

Isn't it just like the Edmonton Police

My Biker Jacket



My biker jacket draped over a chair reminded me of an interesting Sunday morning experience a couple of years ago. I had wandered into the York Hotel café and asked an Aboriginal man to buy me breakfast. He was shocked and asked me to buy him breakfast instead. I told him I couldn't afford it but if he wanted to walk two blocks with me I would make him breakfast. He asked if two of his buddies could join us, and we set off to my residence.

On the way to my place one of the gentlemen said he belonged to a gang. I wasn't fearful going to my place with three men, one a gang member, because I discovered long ago that when we do God's will in his time and power, out of love, and seek his glory, he sticks to his promise in Romans 8:28 that all things work together for good to those who love God sincerely.

While I was preparing breakfast, one of the men decided to test my hospitality by making a long distance phone call. After a good breakfast, the gang member asked if he could have my nice black leather jacket.

In Jesus' most famous discourse, the Sermon on the Mount, he says in Mathew 6:40 that if someone asks for our shirt we should offer him our jacket, too.

Service to continue their little games of threats, intimidation and the like, only to once again be scared off by a successful advocate. Anybody would think that E.P.S would have learned by their mistakes. The Balwin incident comes to mind - (First Nations people abducted by the city police,

driven around like cattle sweating in the back of a police van then dropped off in the Balwin neighbourhood)..

I refuse to be threatened and intimidated by any police force and will continue to be a presence wherever I go.

By Ivan Miller

A Voice for Justice: Disability Rights.



Our core beliefs become the essence of who we are. We must define ourselves from within rather than believing people's opinions of who they think we are. Our uniqueness must shine through demonstrating our incredible value, worthiness and courage.

Our Government has made a "legal commitment" to safeguard the rights of people with disabilities against discrimination; we are supposed to have a strong legislative framework that supports equality of opportunities. Our Department of Justice is supposed to work to ensure that Canadians enjoy a system of justice that is fair and most importantly accessible to people with disabilities. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is supposed to ensure that employers meet their duties to provide a "safe workplace" to their employees, this includes people with disabilities. Unions are supposed to protect our rights and to negotiate fair wages for us, to ensure employees work in a "healthy environment" and they are not treated unjustly by their employers and this includes people with disabilities.

While all of the above should provide us with a sense of justice and security, the fact is that all of this has become a constellation of words that seem to dissipate in the midst of a storm, we usually find ourselves with a lot of information but without a department or an entity that is willing to help us navigate the system.

We must take off the veil and allow our conscience to see with clarity that disability is a legitimate issue, usually followed by

prejudices and discrimination in our society which is done in subtle and overt ways and is done "with impunity" in our society.

As a person with a disability, the word "disability" seems to target an infinite array of interpretations. Suddenly we are seen as our "disability" and not as person that in the past has been an active financial contributor in our society, with extensive and successful job histories. The barriers are set by the ignorance about our disabilities, it is the fear of differences, but most importantly it is the incredible sense of entitlement, power and control over a person with a disability that allows "people in power" to commit the unlawful travesties of discrimination that affects us in such incredible ways.

If we do not want people with disabilities to be made burdens of society, we must play a part in stopping the denigration, the humiliation the stripping of rights from people with disabilities and realize that discrimination against any human being is against the law.

Our Rights are not gifts, to be given by merit or to be taken in order to humiliate and denigrate who we are or what we stand for. They are a legal right in the sense that generates a corresponding legal duty to our Government and to every person that holds a responsibility over the well being of other human being. We all deserve to be treated with "respect and dignity" in order to live a fulfilling, "healthy" and productive life style.

When we view ourselves in the eye of a storm, the preservation of our self image is dedicated to our own self regard, which is referred as "our honor". This is something that no one can take from us. We need to be given opportunities to demonstrate our capabilities; we need our cry for justice to be heard.

By Maria Broda

After Jesus motivated me to give the gang member my jacket, he gave me his more expensive, colourful biker jacket. It's so like God to reward us when we obey Him out of love.

I have recently moved closer to The Mustard Seed so I don't hang around the Boyle Street Community Centre as much,

and I have been attending The Mustard Seed church at 3 p.m. Sundays.

Because my address is now close to the Edmonton Street News office, I will also be distributing papers from my home. To buy papers call me at 780 752-2901 or stop by at 9625-107 Avenue.

By Pedro Schultz



Hugh MacDonald, MLA

Edmonton-Gold Bar



Constituency Office
Edmonton Gold Bar
#102, 7024 – 101 Avenue, NW
Edmonton, Alberta T6A 0H7
Tel: 414-1015
Fax: 414-1017

e-mail: hugh.macdonald@assembly.ab.ca
 website: www.liberalopposition.com

Mama's Chickens

Chapter Ten – Coming of Age

By Sharon Spencer

Because of my seniority, I got to stay up the latest. Without even noticing it, I became Mama's friend and confidante. Often there would be a special show on and Mama would say, "Don Messer's on tonight, Sherry." Maybe I was supposed to jump for joy and get excited, but I was fourteen, and the only thing that really excited me was the fact that I, and I alone, would sit on the avocado green plastic sofa with my mother. With as much sincerity as I could muster, I would try to pretend I was excited over all the little antidotes Mother recited and the big question that was posed "Were the main performers doing it?" I hadn't a clue what "doing it" meant.

That was something that Mama soon felt she had to clarify, since it had never been done for her. On these occasions, she would turn to me and say, "Sherry, would you like to sleep in my bed tonight?"

Would I like to sleep with her? Did she even have to ask? Did she not know that I adored her every move? This would be the very pinnacle of perfection. Into the huge mysterious bed I went silently.

We did not touch. We did not cuddle. She lay stiffly at my side. The uncomfortable silence was embarrassing and fell heavily over us like a cold, wet blanket of distance. Finally she cleared her throat and the startled silence was broken. "Uhhhh." Her small voice quivered like a fine violin slightly out of tune.

"Sherry, I have something to tell you." She drew a long, laboured sigh. "When, when a man and a... a woman are married and they love each other," sigh "they... they," she stammered. "They what, Mama?" I quizzed. "They... they make love." She threw this statement out into the darkened night, breathing a long sigh of relief. As a mother she had done her duty to me and spoke of the dreaded deed in verbal form.

At this point, I was not quite sure of what this entailed. There had been some half-whispers among my classmates, but it was forbidden fruit, which, in our small minds, made the unknown that much more exciting. But her and my Father. That was unthinkable! Hoping to hide the disgust in my voice, I politely asked, "You mean Daddy and you screw?"

There was a horrified gasp as she sharply took air deeply into the recesses of her lungs. "Sherry, it's not called that when you are married. It's called making love." Her voice

was deliberate and tight, and she half screamed at me in the darkness. "And yes, we do, and just where did you ever hear that word?"

At this point, there were no words to express the revulsion I felt. I thought I was going to vomit right there all over her in her wonderful bed - the bed where she did the dreaded act with the dreaded father. I was not entirely certain of what that dreaded act involved, but I knew that somehow naked female body parts were brought together with naked male parts. I grabbed my stomach and, at the same time, I was very thankful for the generous cover of darkness that hid my acute embarrassment and utter disgust. Surely she must be mistaken. Not my saintly mother with that man.

After a long silence, she tried to start again. "Sherry, it's different when you love someone." Now she was confusing me. Love? Did she actually love my father? This conversation was becoming more complex every moment. She was not only admitting to committing that shameful act with my father, but she was also confessing to liking him! That would explain all the banging in the middle of the night when we kids would be wakened and think a space ship was coming through the wall! I was grateful that she could not see me or read my thoughts at that moment. My mind exploded as one question after another flooded my head. All questions I dared not ask.

Weakly, the conversation began again. "Sherry, stay a virgin. Keep it for your husband. It's the only thing of value a woman has to give her husband." At that point, I was not exactly sure what a virgin was, but I would surely remain one until my dying day if necessary, for it seemed so very important to my mother.

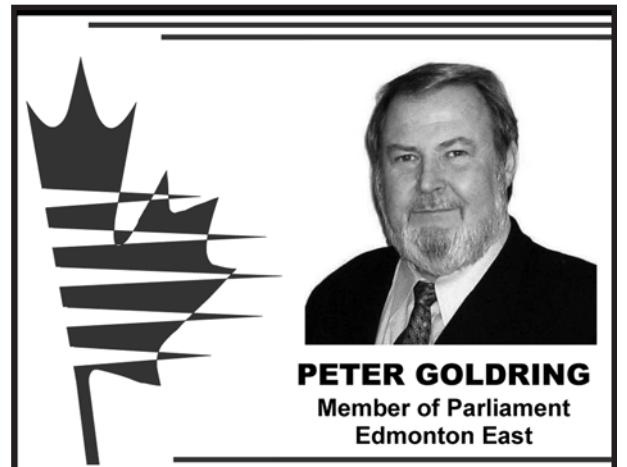
Over a period of time, we would have more of these painfully distressing conversations; conversations that kept the two of us awake staring into the silence and the ceiling long into the night. Over and over she would repeat to me, "Stay a virgin. Keep it for your husband." This must have been a rite of passage in her mind intended only for me, for as far as I know, none of the other children would have to go through this form of total humiliation. She must have figured I would pass along all the details. Later these dark talks would bring much confusion and pain into my life. But much later, when I became a mother, I would cherish the memory of these awkward moments in my heart, knowing what they had cost her.

Man of Christ Abased

me to be fitted for new contact lenses. Gay stood next to the chair as though I were a child while my eyes were examined. I was still limping, and unable to wear a shoe on my left foot, but at least I would be able to see. Going to school the next week, everything looked different. I had been using the girls' washroom adjacent to my classroom for three and a half months because with my impaired vision I couldn't read the signs to find the staff washroom and I didn't want anyone to know just how blind I really was. With my new lenses, the school was no longer a confusing maze of pods, and open area classrooms.

The next week, Gay came up with the idea of making our own Christmas cards - he said it would be more personal, and would save money. I drew a picture of Mary holding the baby Jesus, and he wrote his own Christmas message, a message about accepting Jesus as your saviour and lord, so the card was more a tract than a Christmas greeting. Dutifully, I took the card to school to make photocopies, enough for Gay to give to his church family. He intended for me to give them to the students, too, but I had no intention of doing so. Unfortunately, the school principal stopped by and saw the pile of cards on my desk. He picked one up, read it, then said, "You can't preach religion in school."

I tried to explain that they weren't for the



PETER GOLDRING
Member of Parliament
Edmonton East

A CAUSE WORTHY OF SUPPORT

As the Member of Parliament for Edmonton East, Peter Goldring receives many requests to support special projects in the riding. One of those is for a new building for the Ukrainian Canadian Archives and Museum of Alberta (UCAMA) which will be part of the revitalization of the city's Downtown East. Through a unique concept that integrates existing heritage buildings into its design, the museum project will preserve and enhance an important city landmark that is a part of our cultural history.

The present UCAMA building does not provide the proper environment to house the extensive ethnographic, archival and library collections of the UCAMA. Without such an environment, there is risk of damage to many unique artefacts that are an important part of Canadian cultural history. Ukrainian immigrants were vitally important to the settlement and growth of Western Canada, making UCAMA an important institution not just for Alberta but for the whole country.

The new facility, in the former Lodge Hotel, will draw people to the area to experience the educational and cultural offerings of the museum, with an accompanying economic boost to the area. *Canadian Architect* chose the project as one of six recipients of its 2006 Awards for Excellence for architectural design, for its incorporation of a combination of design elements, including site, structure, materials, geographical and social context and environmental features.

The Province of Alberta and the City of Edmonton have each contributed \$3 million to the project. Private sector fundraising is ongoing, but more money is needed. On behalf of UCAMA, Mr. Goldring wrote to the federal Heritage Minister to ask if the federal government could help.

Peter Goldring thinks it is important for a Member of Parliament to assist community groups with worthwhile projects. What do you think?

780-495-3261 www.petergoldring.ca

Chapter 9-Celebrations

By Lauren Petersen

I stood silently watching as Gay looked through the coats on the rack in the store, searching for something affordable. At length he pulled out a black pile coat for me to try on. "At least it's black," I thought as I buttoned the shapeless coat. Satisfied, Gay took the coat, then walked over to the men's section of the store and selected a knee length, brown, leather overcoat priced at more than five times what mine cost. After preening in front of the mirror, he paid for both, then we left the store wearing our new winter coats. Since it was only a month until Christmas, Gay said the coat was my early Christmas present. I dutifully thanked him, knowing that from that day forward I would have to remember to tell everyone who made any mention of the coat that it was a gift from my husband. His gift we picked out later - a heavy gold neck chain.

I remembered less than a year before when my sister Sharon and I purchased winter coats, how we tried on coat after coat, giggling, then finally left, me with a teal blue coat and her in turquoise. I had knee length leather boots, too. But that coat was thrown into the trash, a burned ruin, and my new winter boots were a pair of synthetic ankle high boots given to me by my elderly aunt because they hurt her feet.

Our next stop was the optometrist's for

students, knowing even as I did that I was still in trouble for using school materials for personal use. After he left, I shoved the cards out of sight into my purse - Gay would still be expecting them, and he need never know that I hadn't given out any to my students, but the damage was done.

The last day of school before Christmas break, several students shyly placed small gifts on my desk - there was a green glass bottle of bubble bath shaped like a Christmas tree, salt and pepper shakers shaped like little brown owls, a porcelain apple for the teacher, and a glass candle holder. I was touched by these small tokens of affection - one bright spot in my dreary existence. When I reached home, Gay watched as I placed my gifts on a shelf next to a small glass penguin I had received from my sister. His face darkened, and without saying a word, he strode over to the shelf, picked up my gifts one by one, and smashed each onto the floor leaving a mess of broken glass and spilled bubble bath for me to clean up.

I stood frozen, and the darkness inside grew heavier, but I dared say nothing. "They are only things," I tried to console myself. "Things that can be replaced." But I knew that they were irreplaceable.

I didn't know it at the time, but that first Christmas with Gay was just a preview to all the celebrations to come.

Homeless Connect



Offers a day of compassion and services

For homeless people and those on the verge of becoming homeless, accessing everyday services can present an insurmountable challenge. That's why Homeward Trust and the Shaw Conference Centre teamed up again Sunday May 24th to offer those in need a one-stop venue of various free services and advice, including mental health assessments, dental care, haircuts, birth control, immunizations, foot care, housing information, help with taxes, employment and training services and more. In addition those who attended were given care packages with tooth paste, tooth brushes, shampoos, soap and other products, shared a free lunch and could get free clothing. More than ----- people attended.

The day kicked off with a rally for hundreds of volunteers and service providers in the Shaw Conference Centre Hall. Speakers included Councillor Ben Henderson and Alberta MLA David Xiao. The rally wrapped up with Aboriginal drumming and a blessing from an elder.

Doors opened to the public at 10 a.m. Guests registered as they walked in, and were given a map of the various booths and service areas. Volunteers were on hand to answer questions and to offer assistance.

Homeless Connect originated in San Francisco under Mayor Gavin Newsom in October 2004 as a way for outreach workers to engage the city in addressing homelessness. In 2007, Cliff Higuchi, Assistant General Manager of Shaw Conference Centre, and Kenn Bur, Director of Strategic Relations, Edmonton Economic Development corporation, organized a meeting with members of various social agencies about holding a Homeless Connect event in Edmonton.

The first Homeless Connect Edmonton, held October 5, 2008, was a huge success with hundreds of volunteers and over 40 social agencies serving the needs of more than 1,800 of Edmonton's homeless and at risk citizens.

By Linda Dumont

Fibromyalgia, Chronic Pain, Fatigue, IBS, Carpal Tunnel, Incontinence, Asthma?

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Photos clockwise

Photo - feet By Linda Dumont
Photo - hair By Allan Sheppard
People line up to have their hair cut.
Clothing distribution
Volunteers direct

Photo: tent by Allan Sheppard
Native Friendship Centre had a teepee set up where people could meet with Aboriginal elders for counseling.
Photo - crafts by Linda Dumont
Photo: sign in by Allan Sheppard



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