



Oceanside & Area

Fall/Winter Newsletter - 2022

President's Report

- Robin Campbell

Sometimes our life seems so troubled and weary and our world can become a little dark... The news of today brings one to feel depressed at times – catastrophes due to climate change, unreasonable wars causing suffering and death to so many, repressive governments resulting in revolts amongst populations, hunger, starvation, disease and suffering at every turn.

This is the time when we should remind ourselves that we cannot change the world for everyone but we can change the world for one person at a time. When the weather turns colder with more rain and snow, we at Manna continue to work to bring some comfort and warmth to one person at a time. It could be in the form of providing a warm donated coat, some waterproof boots, clean socks, a few food items to tide one over until food bank day or the soup kitchen day. Even a scarf and hat can mean so much to someone who is

cold, wet and lacking shelter of any kind. The recent change in weather has made our task even more difficult but our dedicated donors and volunteers continue to provide clothing, food donations and, indeed, medication, and even assistance for travel to medical appointments when required. As we move into 2023, I feel we have made little progress in reducing the numbers of people requiring help. Indeed, the economy has made it necessary for several folks who were on the edge having to move into their cars or motor homes or even tents just to survive. Many of these are seniors and many of them disabled. Manna continues in the front lines to be the place many homeless and poor turn to for non-judgemental assistance whatever their needs may be. Your help with donations of food, clothing or cash are so greatly appreciated at this time of year to help us in our continued endeavors.

What We Do

We support individuals, couples and families suffering from poverty by offering tangible help such as food, transportation (bikes), laundry vouchers, hygienic supplies, clothing, rain gear and outdoor survival equipment.

Our mission is to provide the homeless and the impoverished with the basic provisions needed for survival.

**Manna
Wednesdays
at the
Salvation Army
Soup Kitchen**

*A Big
Thank You
To All Our
Volunteers!*



The Cost of Poverty *by Jerrold Paetkau*

Poverty has a cost. The cost of poverty is witnessed physically, mentally, spiritually, materially, relationally, and environmentally. The web-site, *Homeless Hub* at outlines one in seven Canadians live in financial insecurity costing our health, social services, and policing services \$72 - 84 billion annually. The Homeless Hub also chronicles that one in five households pay more than 50% of earnings on housing. A growing number of Canadians are slipping below the poverty line, while an increasing number of seniors are daily facing the challenge to purchase food or medicine. Inflation is never a friend to those who live pay cheque to pay cheque. As summer is approaching, many BC communities worry about the arrival of "Shopping Cart People". Some say, "It's an eye-sore to see abandoned shopping carts piled with discarded junk and THOSE PEOPLE." Physically they are messy and mentally they are often handicapped or dealing with undiagnosed disabilities. These are

the easily identified examples of community poverty and the resolution is often to move them down the road to the next community. But there is no easy solution.

The more difficult examples of poverty that pay a heavy price on our society are hidden. For example, the spiritual cost of depression and anxiety resulting in an increase of suicide and overdoses in all age groups, particularly Boomers; the breakdown of relationships resulting in an increase of single families and child poverty; the inner disillusionment that disregards dropping personal trash, cigarette butts, or food wrappers. We all suffer, at times, from the forces that enable poverty.

The answer, I believe, is not the one presented by the *Homeless Hub* organization and their desire for greater government intervention with supports. Yes, it takes a willing government to implement policies in keeping with the values of its citizenry, but policies will

never be fully implemented and money will always be misspent, so what is really necessary are individuals willing to pause long enough to know the name of the person 'panhandling' beside the road, pick up the odd piece of trash from time to time, and connect with someone you haven't seen for a while.

For Manna, we believe our friends are important, so we seek to demonstrate the traits of value, honour, compassion, acceptance, and worth through the practice of listening to someone's story, never judging or blaming, offering access to the resources we have and those we know about in our community, and asking a simple question, "How are you?" – and actually meaning it.

I'm not trying to be "preachy", we don't need more platitudes in our life – we also can't wait for the government to "fix it". I'm convinced solutions begin when we think, "How can I better understand what is going on here and how to best listen and learn?"



Jerrold & Pinky



Annual Report

We are very thankful for our generous community over the years. These past two years of pandemic have stretched our ability to respond to the needs in our community. While we've not been able to independently meet on Saturday, as in the past, we have been responding to phone requests and operating upon invitation at the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen and an RV park on Smithers Road. Sadly, the Covid restrictions have made it impossible for us to offer meaningful participation for our volunteers to build relationships with our friends. The Covid pandemic also isolated many of our vulnerable/traumatized contacts resulting in the tragic loss of twenty friends through Opioid

overdose. The resulting emotional impact upon our marginalized community is hard for me to fathom. Safe to say, many have expressed feeling abandoned, forgotten, anxious, and invisible. Their appreciation for Manna just “being there” is palpable each week – thank you for making it possible to provide steady, positive support.

We've drawn on past years of budget surplus to help us purchase the necessary resources this year. Our grocery expenses doubled to over \$93,000 while our donations were \$83,000. (This doesn't include the expenses for our van, for gas, insurance, and maintenance.) Fortunately when we purchase food wholesale from QF, we are able to increase our

resource availability, and QF will often subtract a percentage of the purchase as their donation to Manna.

So, for each dollar donated to Manna, QF makes it possible for us to purchase \$1.30 of groceries. This means, you get more “bang for your buck” with a cash donation than if you were to spend the same amount on canned food.

Our hope for the coming year is twofold: First, as the pandemic recedes, people will experience a lessening sense of anxiety and a greater propensity toward self-care; and secondly, with greater self-care we can include with our grocery items those that also promote self-sufficiency like flour with baking supplies and dried beans for soups.

Orca Place

Parksville has had a checkered relationship with Island Crises Cares' Supportive Housing at Orca Place, 222 Corfield Avenue. Since its inception, I've been invited to provide Community Chaplain support for those living at Orca. This has been a rewarding practice. I've been able to drop in for two breakfast periods each week. I've helped residents with two “Celebrations of Life” and the process of losing friends; we've celebrated birthdays, recovery anniversaries, and new jobs; and I've heard life stories - victories and challenges, lessons learned - and I've appreciated the wisdom gleaned from their experience.

Orca Place is a wonderful example that combines a supportive community with individuals willing to risk transformation. Sobriety can be scary. Medicated normality can

be threatening. Replacing inner chaos with calmness is often an experience that requires constant adjustments to a “new normal”. Thankfully the success of Orca Place is evidenced in changed lives – examples of health, happiness, and feelings of hope found in many who live there.



Back to School

There is a popular expression, “You're never too old to learn”. So maybe there is hope for me learning Pickle Ball. With Manna, we've been going back to school forever. Each year, we've been approached by local schools to assist with needs witnessed in the families who attend. Through the generosity of our community, we've been able to supply children's coats, gloves, and toques, breakfast and lunch supplies, food coupons and specialized assistance. In one school,

this year, we've been able to help provide over 100 weekly meal supplies – fruit cups, soup cups, breakfast bars, KD cups – and additional help with their weekend “Backpack Food Program”, offering soups, peanut butter, chili, pasta with sauce, and granola bars. In another school, we were able to offer QF coupons for a family suddenly unemployed and nearly homeless. This has been possible from the continual support we receive from our community – thank you.

Needing Winter Supplies

- We have a shortage for tooth brushes and toothpaste
- Cooler weather means we need more pants, long sleeve shirts, hoodies
- Boots and shoes are in dire need (we have three men needing size 13-14)

'What about food?' – you may ask – our partnership with Quality Food Warehouse allows us to purchase wholesale case lots *and they often donate extra!!*

So for your cost to donate 2-3 cans of stew; Manna can purchase 4-6 cans with those same equivalent funds.

Donations can be mailed to: Manna Homeless Society, Box 389, Errington, BC, V0R 1V0

You can drop off your donations on Wednesday at the Manna van parked near the Salvation Army Soup Kitchen (across from the Parksville Fire Hall).

And you can call **250-607-7142** and coordinate a time for a pick-up.

Thank you for your partnership with Manna, and your concern for the vulnerable in our community,
Thank you!

- Jerrold
Manna Homeless Society
Community Chaplain

About Manna

Overseen by a Board of Directors and co-founder, Robin Campbell, Manna Homeless Society (MHS) exists because of it's committed volunteers and incredible community support. We operate entirely with volunteer labour.

MHS was established in 2011 as a charitable organization that cares for the well-being of

the homeless and the impoverished in Oceanside. Our area of out reach covers Nanoose Bay, Parksville, Coombs, Whiskey Creek, Qualicum Beach and Qualicum Bay. MHS is a non-profit organization that is supported by individuals, corporations and foundations and issues tax receipts for donations.