

Sharing Stories

There is an old tale of a holy man searching for wisdom. He is walking through a forested area in a place not known to him. He notices a shiny object barely jutting out of the soil, under a bush. He digs it out and discovers a valuable, rough jewel, the size of his fist.

That night a man in a nearby village has a dream of a man discovering a large jewel in the forest. He awakes and goes in search of the man. On finding him he tells the man about his dream. The holy man pulls the jewel from his knapsack and says, "Here is the jewel of which you dreamed, you may have it".

The villager takes the gift and returns home. The next day he awakes and again searches for the man in the forest. On finding him he returns the jewel, and says, "Please teach me the wisdom of how you could give this away so easily."

*"Give me the wisdom to know what must be done
and the courage to do it."
12 Step philosophy*

I was in church, and a woman approached me after the service and advised me that she wanted to donate to Freedom's Door. I thanked her and suggested that if she wished to write a cheque, she could do so, and I would take it to Freedom's Door the next day. She sat in a pew, took a cheque from her bag, filled it out and handed it to me.

I was stunned by its enormous value. I questioned whether it was really her intention to write such a large cheque. She stated, "My brother died and left me a large inheritance. I have decided that I will give it all away to worthy charities. It is my great pleasure to receive joy through bringing joy to the many less fortunate people who will be blessed by these gifts."

*"It is in giving that we receive."
St. Francis of Assisi*

A gentleman came to Canada as a young man to get a good education and a better life. He was enormously successful. His family has been greatly blessed by this country and its people. He and his family set up a charitable foundation and are enjoying their retirement by giving away the majority of their wealth to charities which they believe will make a large difference in the lives of many people, and therefore, better the communities of British Columbia. This family has chosen Freedom's Door to receive donations to assist those who are working so hard to overcome their addictions and mental health issues. Their gifts are being used to construct facilities and homes to allow more programming for an increased number of people. We have two construction projects at this time which could eventually add 32 new bedrooms to our current capacity of 99. This family has "adopted" us

and has passed along the true meaning of brotherhood and success.

*"True success is not measured by the size of one's bank
account, but by the generosity in one's heart."
T.S.*

Each week at Freedom's Door we have "super chore" days. The men carry out cleaning and maintenance of our facilities. One job is for two men to go down each side of our street, as well as all streets within two blocks of our homes, collecting cigarette butts and discarded debris.

A neighbor was standing in his yard when our men were going by and asked, "What are you doing?" The fellow replied, "I am at Freedom's Door and each week we go out to clean up the neighborhood." He then said, "I notice that your yard has a foot of grass and weeds. Why is that?" The neighbor stated, "My wife and I have just received triplets. We are so busy and so exhausted, that we have no time for the more minor issues."

The next day the two men of Freedom's Door went to the neighbor's yard and mowed the grass.

*"Love your neighbor as yourself."
Jesus*

Every year we have a fundraising dinner as it is so important to gather and remain in contact with our donors on a personal level. The meal and presentations are prepared by the residents and staff. The evening is enjoyable and inspiring. At the end of the presentations, we ask our guests to open their hearts to offer a donation. The gifts are placed in an envelope and then put in a bucket on the way out. Later that evening the envelopes are opened, and the tally is calculated. On one occasion an envelope was opened which revealed a handful of coins totaling \$1.55. Clearly this was all that person had available. All donations are so appreciated and sometimes the smaller ones have the biggest impact.

*"I tell you the truth, this poor woman has put in more
than all of them. For they have put in from their excess.
She has put in what she needed for her own living."
Luke 21:1-4*

For 22 years we have been able to grow and thrive in our offerings of recovery services to those in need. As a result, over 2000 men have been blessed. We are so grateful for the generosity of so many "Friends of Freedom's Door", as well as our many, hard working volunteers and staff members.

Thank you and may God bless you!

The Directors

George Arambasich • Patrick Groening
Helmut Hubert • Chris Matte • Mel Newth
Sandy Shier • Tom Smithwick

Testimony

Hello. My name is Chris. I am 25 years old, and I am an addict. I was raised in Kelowna with my alcoholic mother, stepfather and older drug addicted brothers and sister. I visited my birth father who was addicted to alcohol and crack cocaine.

When I was 11, I met a friend who introduced me to alcohol, cannabis and crime. I was arrested for the first time in my elementary school classroom by the RCMP. I was sentenced to community service time. As time progressed, I got deeper into my chosen lifestyle, with crystal meth and from there life spiraled out of control. I was sent to a youth custody center for the first time at age 13. Shortly after release I became addicted to crack cocaine and heroin. I was in and out of three different youth detention centers as well as house arrest. I spent 3½ years locked up.

At age 17, I met a young woman who became pregnant, and we moved in together. I was arrested shortly after my son was born and spent a couple of months in jail. After that I got my act together and was clean and sober for 2-½ years. I had a job. We bought a home and had another child.

In December of 2020 I relapsed on crack cocaine. In early 2021 I severely dislocated my shoulder, requiring an operation. I was prescribed fentanyl patches and hydromorphone. Of course I got addicted to my prescription medications. Once my doctor cut me off my medications, I went to the street to purchase fentanyl and cocaine. My wife found out and left me.

I had a cousin who went to Freedom's Door and received a lot of positive help. He suggested that I apply and I called right away. Due to a long waiting list, I had to call each day for 32 days for me to be admitted.

My time at Freedom's Door has completely changed my life. This place taught me how to overcome my addiction issues. I knew that on my own I could not do it. But with the strength of my AA and NA brotherhood as well as relying on my Lord and Savior, it was all possible. The staff of Freedom's Door are so welcoming, knowledgeable, and strive to go the extra mile for every resident. I have made so many good connections. Freedom's Door offers multiple resources, on site, as well as in the community. This helps the men to be successful during their initial 90 Day Program. Then they can move on to the Next Steps Program which offers so many different life skills training programs beyond which I would have thought possible.

I live a completely different life today. I look and feel like I have never felt before; positive and growing. Today, I have found what I was truly meant to be. I am working. I am in a positive relationship, and we have a new baby. Life is so good.

I have been clean and sober since September 27, 2021.

I cannot imagine where my life would be, were it not for the love and guidance of Freedom's Door and the hundreds of people who support this good work. Thank you!

Busy With Construction Projects

At Freedom's Door we always seem to have a long wait list of men seeking access to our recovery services. It often takes many weeks to receive an opening of an available bed. This is such a shame as it is so important to have a bed and service available when a person in active addiction decides to end his chaotic life on the streets. To be told, "No, we have no room available at this time, you will have to go on our waiting list." is a difficult thing to hear. It takes courage to make the first call for help, and it is such a disappointment when a positive response is not available.

With this in mind, we have commenced a process to provide more rooms and beds for those in need.

Our first project, which began construction in the spring of 2024, is a building in the rear yard of House 3 on Centennial Crescent. This building will contain two wheelchair accessible bedrooms and a fully handicap accessible bathroom and shower. The building will also provide a large social room containing a pool table, ping-pong, darts and large screen TV providing the men in the four homes on Centennial Crescent a space for socializing during hours when group counselling sessions or 12 Step programs are not in progress. In addition, when any resident's children visit, he will be able to play a game and socialize with his children. This project is fully funded and should open at the end of September 2024.

Our second project is the Belaire Townhomes Project on Belaire Avenue. We own three homes in a row. The rear yards are deep, enabling us to build four townhomes behind two of these homes. Each unit will have full living facilities and four bedrooms each. A total of 16 new bedrooms will be created. City Council has approved the project, and we hope to begin construction in September. These units will add to our affordable, transition housing for those who have completed the initial 90 Day Recovery Program. They will then continue with the Next Steps Program of life skills training and employment/schooling.

When Phase 1 is completed, we will begin Phase 2, followed by Phase 3. A total of 52 bedrooms will be provided at full buildout.

We have almost completed the fundraising for Phase 1, so we are sure to begin construction as planned. However, fundraising is ongoing as we now need funding for the two future phases. We remain hopeful that the generosity of our community will continue to pour in for the purpose of providing homes for the homeless and recovery programs for those in need. Please consider these projects for your charitable donations. Thank you.

