

“And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.” LUKE 2:10



CHRISTMAS BLESSINGS

We sure are ready for good news, aren't you? What a year (or two) it has been! We've lived it and lamented it and waited for it to pass...but it is time to simply move forward. God has told us repeatedly that we aren't to worry. He has our tomorrow, our future and our "normal" in His hands. This Christmas we look forward to celebrating the birth of the Christ child and the truth of this promise: "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

We look forward to 2022 and to seeing how God will walk us through it. We remain focused on keeping our clients safe, supported and sober and carrying out this ministry in the way He leads. May the promises of God bring hope, joy and good news to your hearts, this Christmas.



23 YEARS AND COUNTING...

2024 will mark the 25th anniversary of LIFE Recovery Association. To commemorate this occasion, Annette Hoekstra is interested in writing a book on LIFE Recovery and it's journey in the past 25 years. Her focus in writing this book would be to emphasize God's provision, His guiding hand, and His faithfulness from the very beginning to where the Association is at present. Once completed this book will be sold as a means of raising funds for LIFE Recovery Association. If you have been involved and have a story to share or photos of your time with LIFE, please email director@liferecovery.ca and we will connect you with Annette. We look forward to the reminiscing and the celebration and thank Annette for her heart for this project.



CHYREL'S STORY

Making a Difference, one day at a time, one client at a time...

Hi, my name is Chyrel and I am a recovering alcoholic. My first drink was when I was 9 years old and by the time I was 13, alcohol was my best friend. I grew up always feeling like something was wrong with me. I didn't fit in, I felt different – like I wasn't enough. So when I was introduced to alcohol, it gave me the feeling of comfort. I became more outgoing, was smarter and prettier and could talk to anyone.

Eventually, it became my master — it owned me. I lost my children, my marriage and almost, my life. I have been to many treatment centers and would stay sober but eventually would start drinking again. I was devastated and hopeless. I was at my bottom, couldn't live this way but too afraid to commit suicide. I had a counselor that I opened up to, telling her I couldn't go on like this and wanted to die. She told me about LIFE Recovery. She suggested I go there as I had nothing to lose.

Well let me tell you, as soon as I walked in, I had a calmness come over me and felt the presence of God. For the first time in a long time, I had hope. I did the Twelve Steps but the most important thing that happened was giving my life to Jesus. I have not looked back and now live in a sober living house. I sponsor other women, am involved in an AA program where I attend meetings and do service work. I still live with the disease of alcoholism but the difference is I am in recovery and as long as I hand my life over to God and follow the spiritual path that I am on daily, I have the best chance of having the good life that I deserve.

Going to LIFE Recovery saved my life. Thank you and God Bless you.

Note: And can we just brag for a moment to say that Chyrel just completed Culinary Training at the top of her class and has been hired for full time work as a dietary aid. Way to go Chyrel!

If you or someone you know needs help, we offer abstinence based, residential addiction recovery programs, in a caring, Christian community of support. For more information please contact our main office at 604.855.4440



2022 GALA UPDATE

Given the needs and challenges in our community from recent flooding, we have postponed our 2022 fundraising event. Our plan will be to host an event similar to last year's with small in-home Love for LIFE dinners in late spring. Please reach out to **Coletta** at **604-302-8940** if you would like to volunteer on the committee, sponsor or donate to the event or if you'd like to host a dinner.



Flood damage in our second stage housing in November, 2021

PROGRAM UPDATES

In 2021, 52 clients accessed our residential recovery programs. Some came through for the first time, completed the 90 day program and went on to home or Second Stage. Some who weren't successful the first time (or more), tried again and are still sober. Some relapsed and are still locked in their addiction. Success is the ability to try and when you fall, to try again. To that end, every 24 hours that someone stays with us is success. It is time where they are safe, not at risk of overdose, not creating challenges for themselves, policing, healthcare or loved ones. We are grateful for every day that a woman chooses to remain sober and each new day brings hope that it will continue.

FIRST STAGE

Although we made it through the first 19 months of the pandemic without illness, our First Stage home was placed on enhanced monitoring for an "outbreak" at the end of September. We had only a few cases but it was an incredibly difficult time for all — especially our staff. Addiction and trauma specialists speak of "Connection as the correction" and yet here we were isolating clients from one another, some of whom were brand new to LIFE Recovery and had yet to get to know us. As staff, we struggled with keeping clients physically "healthy" while recognizing the emotional and mental toll. Thankfully, we were able to resume our regular programming after 14 days. Since then, we have reduced our occupancy to better serve clients and support staff. We continue to follow the health officer's regulations and have found that the residents have been respectful as restrictions change. The holiday season can be challenging for the residents and the staff have been exceptional in keeping a positive attitude, as well as focusing on the reason for the season.

SECOND STAGE

In November, the basements in two of our houses flooded. One house had just been renovated to support 6 clients as an independent sober living house. The basement will remain empty until drainage issues can be repaired and renovations completed once again, but there were 3 bedrooms available upstairs. The other flood, at our Second Stage house displaced two of our clients however, God's plan was bigger as this expedited the transition to sober living. With the help of community volunteers and local businesses, 3 of our 2nd stage clients were able to move in over the weekend of December 11th. It is amazing to see God's hand in all of this. We are looking forward to the Christmas season and are believing the best days are ahead.



LIFE'S SECOND CHANCE THRIFT STORE

Our store has had a great year due to the efforts of our many volunteers. With the total number of people volunteering a little lower than pre-covid, our regulars are taking extra shifts, coming in on holidays and evenings to sort, price and get items out on the shelf. We have great reviews from people who come from up and down the valley to check out our stock and at the time of this writing, we have had **\$593,252** in sales. After expenses, that is more than 1/3 of the revenue required to operate our residential recovery programs! Thank you to all those who donate clothing, décor, children's items and housewares as well as those who donate time to make it all happen! You are all an integral part of the LIFE Recovery Association ministry.

COME PARTNER WITH US!

WORKING AND VOLUNTEERING:

In the last year, 37% of social service employees changed professions. Stress, burnout, overwhelm and compassion fatigue are all part of working in this field and made worse with a pandemic and overdose epidemic. LIFE Recovery is different though. We have an amazing team, equally committed to clients, co-workers, volunteers and ministry. Nevertheless, there have been staff changes. Currently, we are searching for an Administration and Event Assistant, House Monitor (house mum) and Support Workers. In addition, we would like to add program volunteers to our team. People who can help with transportation to meetings and activities and act as a watchful eye. If you are looking for a fulfilling role where your personal and professional values are congruent, a place where you can make a difference, and an environment built on respect and care, please reach out to admin@liferecovery.ca.

GIVING:

In January, we will move to a new donation platform – Keela. Canada Helps will still be available however they collect a higher fee than Keela. Also new will be the option for choosing a receipt immediately, rather than waiting until year end. Please watch for updates via our Facebook page and website.

For year end giving, our store will be closed on December 31st, so in person donations will need to be directed to our main office at 2693 Braeside. Other donation options include a cheque postmarked by December 31st, an e-transfer to admin@liferecovery.ca, an online donation through liferecovery.ca/donate or by telephone with a credit card to **604.855.4440**.