



RANCH EHRLO SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

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Ehrlo Housing celebrates 20 years

What is now a multi-unit community service offering specialized low-income housing to vulnerable groups began with the purchase of an apartment complex in 1997.

In 1995, Ranch Ehrlo Society was approached by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation to discuss the possibility of assuming the mortgage on the complex in south Regina, now known as Lakeshore Village. A few years later Ehrlo Housing was created.

This may have seemed like an outlandish idea for an agency that, up until this point, was mostly focused on providing residential treatment services. But the agency was beginning to look into the idea of preventative community services; programs that could keep families together and healthy, and thereby reduce the number of children in care.

“The idea at the time was that we could provide young families who had low incomes with safe, secure, housing that was permanent,” explained Ehrlo Housing director Shelley Sayer.

“It goes back to the basics of what human beings need: they need quality housing, they need education supports, and they need food security,” added Helen Finucane, the original program director.

Other projects

Once Lakeshore Village was established, Ehrlo Housing was invited by SaskHousing to participate in several other projects. While none of the projects remain in effect today, each of the clients involved developed and maintained successes in meeting their housing needs.

Ehrlo Housing purchased its second housing complex, Washington Park Place, in 2002.

“When we purchased Washington Park Place, there was a real need for housing and supports for young single moms. They were often living in over-crowded, unhealthy spaces. We wanted to provide a safe and affordable place for them to raise their children,” explained Sayer.

The next project for Ehrlo Housing was a unique partnership with Phoenix Residential Society to help vulnerable adults



Lakeshore Village opening

with chronic mental health issues. In 2011, McEwen Manor opened its doors.

Chaz Court was built in 2013. The court is eight small pocket-suites for youth and young adults who have aged out of care but still require support.

As landlord now managing 100 units in Regina, Ehrlo Housing has learned that its ongoing partnerships and collaborative efforts with the community and other like-minded organizations are so very important to the success of its tenants.

Safety focus paying off

Over the past year, the agency has made a point to bring safety to the forefront of our work environments. It has been working with the Service and Hospitality Safety Association (SHSA) to decrease injuries sustained in the workplace.

The agency recently received SHSA's year-end statistics and it was clear that its focus on safety has been paying off! The report showed a 25 per cent decrease in total injuries from 2015, and, more impressive yet, 2016 had the fewest number of injuries since 2009.

As 2017 continues, the agency remains committed to focusing on safety year round. As the "Mission Zero" statement signed by our CEO Andrea Brittin at the end of 2015 says, the only right number of workplace related injuries is ZERO.

Winterfests

It's winter at the Ranch and that only means one thing – the Northern and Southern annual winterfests!

Prince Albert kicked off the festivities on Feb. 17th at the Buckland campus. Throughout the day, the campus was visited by local dignitaries and Advocate for Children and Youth representatives and many family members of Ranch youth and staff.

"Winterfest is part of the positive traditions and culture of the Ranch, and it promotes teamwork and sportsmanship," Buckland campus director of residential services Kevin Mugford explained. "We believe it's one more thing that we do that bonds staff and youth in terms of building relationships and working toward a common goal."

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-Buckland campus director of residential services Kevin Mugford

The organizing committee in Pilot Butte, comprised of unit managers Kelly Cook, Ryan Labatt, David Hamilton, and Deacon Skinner, made some changes to the southern event. The winter celebration, which took place Feb. 24th, began at 12:30 p.m. with a hamburger lunch and wrapped up after the awards presentation around 5 p.m. The condensed program was done to eliminate waiting time between events.



Southern Winterfest (l), Northern Winterfest (r).

Jump start donation



A relationship that began last year has served Ehrlo Sport Venture, and the Outdoor Hockey League (OHL) in particular, very well.

Canadian Tire Jumpstart, offered to sponsor Sport Venture's leagues, all of which provide

equipment and are free of charge for participants. Jumpstart began with a generous donation of hockey equipment for the OHL: 20 pairs of skates, 20 hockey bags, 100 rolls of sock tape, 12 helmets, and numerous pairs of

gloves and elbow pads.

“The timing could not have been better – we dressed 99 per cent of the OHL league, and as a result we had very little equipment left. But there were still kids interested in playing. This donation made it so we didn’t have to turn away any of the players who had just heard of our league and wanted to become involved,” explained Ehrlo Sport Venture manager Amanda McConnell.

The remainder of Jumpstart’s commitment will come in the form of a cash donation, to be used for the overall running of the league, from ice time to transportation and covering any other equipment needs that may arise as the season goes on.

“It is through support from organizations in the community such as Jumpstart that we are able to continue to offer barrier free leagues such as the OHL,” McConnell said. “Sport plays such an important role in the lives of many young people, and we want to be able to continue to give as many of them a chance to participate as we can.”

Going the extra mile

Ranch Ehrlo’s Personal Support Workers (PSW) provide services to



Meshan Thaver

our clients in the Persons with Developmental Disabilities Program. Every day is a little different, just as every client is different. Meshan Thaver, a PSW, works in a program that provides supportive living services to clients who are coping with intellectual, developmental, and other mental health challenges. Each year, he takes one of his clients on a home visit to the Northwest Territories to visit family.

“I’ve worked with Jason* for over eight years and we have built a strong relationship - this makes it a little easier to handle the challenges that come with navigating an airport with a disability,” explained Thaver.

“Jason needed several breaks to give his legs time to rest so we arrived at the airport early and try to book flights with longer layovers.”

He added that it was disappointing to see the attitude of other passengers who are often rushed and even yell at them to hurry.

“At one point, Jason even noticed that he was holding others up and apologized. To minimize these situations, I make sure we have plenty of time before our flight and work with the airport staff to ensure Jason has whatever he needs,” Thaver said.

Jason gets uneasy on the flights due to a bad experience last year when he landed in the middle of a storm. He preoccupied himself with crossword puzzles and coloring books and Thaver ensured that he had a window

“Before finding a home at Ranch Ehrlo, Jason would often wander the streets alone.”

-Meshan Thaver

seat as it calms him to look out the window during the flight.

Thaver had the opportunity to stay the night in Yellowknife. Jason’s brother and his wife invited him to their home for supper.

“They made a special dinner of freshly caught Arctic char – it was delicious!” He added, “They also told me how grateful they are for Ranch Ehrlo and the work our organization does. Before finding a home at Ranch Ehrlo, Jason would often wander the streets alone. Now Jason has a safe and caring environment where all his needs are met.”

**name changed*

New directors

Due to significant program growth, Ranch Ehrlo recently made some changes to the Program for Persons with Developmental Disabilities (PDD). The changes included the addition of two new residential directors, Denis Losie and Pam Dmytriw who started on January 30, 2017.

As part of the changes, Dr. Karl Mack will be taking on a new role in the agency.

“His new role is in the front line training initiative, which will include the articulation and agency-wide training on Ranch Ehrlo’s core values and philosophy,” stated Malcolm Neill, vice president of residential services.

Losie is a long time agency employee. He was previously the unit manager at Woodward House but has held several positions at the agency over his career.

Dmytriw is new to Ranch Ehrlo. She was a social worker who has held management positions with the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region.

Another leadership change saw the creation of an entirely new position - Multiple Program Worker (MPW) manager. Wally Botkin, a former unit manager accepted the role. The position was created as the agency moves to a new staffing model that uses a MPW system to handle vacation requests and family leave time and to minimize reliance on casual staff.

Students raise money for injured dog



Randee Patton and Maddie

Students at Judge Bryant School in Ranch Ehrlo's classroom recently raised money to help a dog, Maddie, that had been hit by a car.

Teacher Randee Patton told the students about how she met Maddie when she took her own dog in for a trip to the vet. She also shared a social media post from CC RezQ's requesting community donations to provide support for the injured dog. Maddie's owners couldn't afford the costs of the vet bills associated with the injuries, so CC RezQ's stepped in.

"My students immediately decided they wanted to help," Patton explained.

The group brainstormed ways to fundraise and settled on a pizza drive. Forty-two pizzas were sold and when the classroom counted the money they came up with a grand total of \$500. The students had the opportunity to hand-deliver their donation and meet Maddie.

Career fair



Shantelle Peterson, office assistant at Buckland campus, discusses potential employment opportunities at a career fair in Prince Albert.

Ice fishing



Students and staff at Schaller and Judge Bryant schools recently visited Buffalo Pound to go ice fishing! Fish were caught and fun was had!

Visit by Corey O'Soup



Corey O'Soup, SK's Advocate for Children and Youth, met with the agency's executive to introduce himself and share his vision for the advocate's office. O'Soup's approach is collaborative and pro-active. He sees education as key, especially for First Nation and Metis children and their families. Addressing mental health concerns is a priority. He is currently working on a special report on suicide in the North using this approach.

Wall mural



Our new Family Treatment Program office now has a beautiful wall courtesy of former client, Darnell (DJ). The painting represents parents with their children in a community environment. The artist explained that there are no emotions displayed on the faces because he does not want individuals to feel that they can't express themselves, however they feel.

New location



Paper Crane Community Arts Centre has moved to the warehouse district. The new, 5,000 square-foot space can be found on the second floor of 1221 Osler Street.