



FALL 2009 NEWSLETTER

THE KEY INGREDIENT

Committed to breaking the cycles of defeat by providing...

Housing
Employment
Life-skills
Personal Development
Spirituality
to Grande Prairie's less fortunate

The past year at Rising Above has been an exciting one! In November of 2008 we opened our first Women's Residence, Montrose House. In March of 2009 we opened our 2nd Women's Residence, Centron House. Along with our Men's Residence, Richmond House, we now have 17 beds available. Over the past 12 months we have housed 27 men and 18 women helping many turn from lives full of defeat to lives full of hope and promise.

And what is the key ingredient that has allowed Rising Above to be the turning point for many people? We provide a structured housing environment with guidelines and curfews, etc. Our life-skills program offers very practical, relevant information that gives our participants the tools that prepare them to move forward. The one-on-one counselling probes into the root pain that led our participants into self destructive behaviour patterns. The built in accountability, 12-Step meetings, and soul work stretch and challenge the participants in many ways.

However, as significant and important as each of these are, they are not what past participants reflect on when they look back on the benefits of the program. We often hear that what empowered our participants to deal with the tough issues and make severe changes was the personal contact with staff and volunteers. Our participants feel accepted and genuinely cared for. As staff, we see the participants as our friends not as our job. We hurt when our friends hurt and we celebrate when our friends work through some heavy issues and come out on the other side. It is this environment that has been the key factor in the successes we have seen.

We have seen a lot friends come and go from the program, with varying degrees of health and healing. God loves and cares deeply about each one of them and as staff we see our main role is to reflect that love to each one who is courageous enough to face the pain of their past and embrace a better life for themselves.

WHAT'S NEW AT RISING ABOVE?

Our new website is up and running!
Check us out at www.risingabovegp.com



Through The Eyes of a Volunteer

Having never been stripped by homelessness, nor rubbed shoulders with the homeless in my middle class circles, I must confess I did not understand them or their battles. Somehow though, I wanted to communicate to them that someone believes in them. Society values them. I leaped at the opportunity to conduct a monthly cooking class while still carrying a fairly full schedule. It doesn't seem like much to me – a few hours on a Thursday once a month after work, and a lunch hour with them two weeks later. Lindsay has made it simple for me to volunteer. I e-mail her the ingredient list and she takes a participant shopping. Everything is ready when I arrive after work. Sometimes we make fancy fair, often more economical and basic dishes. I try to teach the building blocks of cooking, but mostly I want to connect with the ladies.

These times have become rewarding highlights of my month. To watch the women change and grow through the work of the staff is amazing. Often when they first enter the program, they are dealing with withdrawal. They have nervous hands and eyes. They are unsure of me. Soon they begin to open up. They confide their hopes or their fears, their battles or their triumphs. Month by month, they grow in confidence. Many are very thankful for the program, labeling it as "the best thing that could have happened to me", and "just what I needed." Some are dismissed because of substance use and some leave, but many of them return later, after their waiting period. They pick up where they left and work more on their progress. Their hope for a career or a valuable contribution to society fires me. Their despair touches me.

I do not profess to understand homelessness today for I do not have nearly enough time with them. My admiration mounts for the hearts and patience of the staff of Rising Above. I am like the guest who gets to drop in for a visit. They apply the daily elbow grease that produces the results I see. One small thing I am learning: I think I entered volunteering loving the woman for the potential I saw in her of who she could become. I am discovering though, it is better to love for who she is today – a broken lady reaching for healing, struggling with her own setbacks and battles, on her own journey. Someone we still believe in.

Ria Millwater

A dish they loved:

Fruit Pizza

Crust:

½ cup butter ¼ cup icing sugar 1 cup flour

Cut together with two knives or pastry blender. Press in pizza pan. Bake at 350 degrees F about 15 minutes until begins to brown slightly. Remove from oven and allow to cool.

Cream together:

1 8 oz pkg. cream cheese 1/3 cup white sugar 1 tsp vanilla

Spread on cooled crust.

Slice fruit on cream cheese: strawberries, blueberries, kiwi, pineapple, peaches, raspberries

Any combination of fruits, cut or arranged as you please

Glaze:

2 Tbsp cornstarch 1 cup pineapple juice ½ cup sugar 1 Tbsp lemon juice

From the heart....

Dennis' story

I was in my late 50's when I hit rock bottom. Alcohol had taken away my health... my life became sad... I was always depressed... I had lost all my friends... I hadn't been to my home for several months... I was alone... I was hungry... and I had no place to turn for help. After being in and out of detox 5 or 6 times I finally discovered Rising Above. Wasting no time, they took me in. What a difference it has made for me. Everything changed overnight. I had been staying in a place with no running water, no electricity and no heat. I could not cook. I could not get clean. And I could not stay warm. Now I have a place to cook, I have place to clean up and I have a warm bed where I can lay my head each night. I have always believed in God. I grew up in a very religious, Christian family. I knew God was looking out for me. I know He will not let me down. I finally have a place to call home, a place to have a warm meal, a place to make a hot cup of coffee, a place to have people to talk to, a place to make new friends, a place to learn how to live sober & clean, and a place where I can make plans for my future. After five months sober, what a difference! The staff make me feel like a newborn, teaching life-skills about how to live a clean, happy life. I can finally give something back to society. I wonder why more people haven't heard of Rising Above. So many people have been through this program and have benefited. I feel like a newborn again. There is so much to learn in this new life for me. It's like taking the first steps in life all over again. Thanks to the wonderful staff at Rising Above. How easy it is to participate at the meetings that give you strength. I have hope now in this safe haven to get started in a new life sober, drug free and looking forward to my goal. I have connected so much to the Rising Above staff and I am worried about when my time to leave comes.

Dennis A.

L's story...

What do you think of when you hear the words "crack addict"? Do you picture someone Downtown? Hiding in an alley with three or four people? I did. I didn't think that the majority of crack addicts hid in their houses, scared of going outside for fear someone would recognize them.

I was one of the lucky ones. I had enough money coming in that I didn't have to resort to stealing or living on the street. I had just started conning my friends and it made me feel terrible. I knew then that my life was unmanageable so I signed myself into the AADAC Treatment Centre and my employer covered the costs of the 50 day Business & Industry program.

When I got out of AADAC my house was in foreclosure and it sold just before the bank took it. I was let go from my job of 23 years because my employer thought, "Once an addict, always an addict." But people can change. We have the power to change the way we feel about ourselves and to change our behaviours. With Rising Above's help I've learned to forgive myself and have learned life-skills that will help me in recovery. With the help of Rising Above, I have been clean and sober for over a year. With my new beliefs and knowledge I will continue on that way.



IN GOD'S SWEET TIME

by Dean B c 1997

Late one night, some years ago,
a tempting bowl of cookie dough,
A taste or two... or so I thought,
one small pinch would hit the spot,
Later on The empty bowl,
a heavy heart, a guilty soul,
That inner war, most quiet din,
had evidenced the latest sin,
So, where do all these memories go,
that perpetuate forgotten goals,
Of life serene and thoughts sublime,
'you do the time, you did the crime',
And on and on life took it's toll,
on self esteem, the highs, the low,
Until one day in God's sweet time,
I asked for help, and help was mine.

Recovery came in spurts and bites,
On habits past, now shone new lights.
For all alone, too big a task,
A daily chore, for help to ask.
A friendly voice came through the air,
O sponsor dear, can this be fair,
To give up all, how can I trust?
The fear's too great, I feel I must,
Begin somewhere, perhaps today,
To trudge the path another way,
Pray read a thought or think to pray,
And meditate, though day by day,
To any lengths, I'm not so sure,
Through all the tears, is there a cure?
And then one day, in God's sweet time,
I asked for help and help was mine!

That heavy cross that once I bore,
Has lightened now, a lesser chore.
I've learned to trust in tried and true,
I've learned to trust the good in you.
I've shared my pain, my hopes and dreams
And given up those selfish schemes
Of grander plans and thoughts verbose.
I raise my glass and drink a toast;
"A dozen Steps!" that line by line,
Most surely say, "His Will", don't whine
For better things are sure to come,
Life's rhythm now, a calmer drum,
Those fragile thoughts are overcome,
The struggles' past, "Thy will be done."
And still today, in God's sweet time,
I ask for help and help is mine.

In a typical week at Rising Above each participant will...

- Attend 15 hours of life-skills group training
- Attend 4 "12-Step" or related meetings
- Spend at least 1 hour in one-on-one counselling
- Spend at least 1/2 hour in accountability sessions
- Participate in 1 nutrition/cooking time together
- Spend 5 hours volunteering in the community
- Spend 5 hours completing "Soul Work"
- Work part time or look for work
- Actively participate in the community

Some of the social outings offered are:

- Overnight camping
- Hiking
- BBQ's & picnic's
- Sporting events
- Holiday meals
- Swimming



If you are interested in volunteering with Rising Above please contact Lindsay Enns at 780-357-3204. We are always looking for people to mentor our participants and assist with life-skill training. We are also looking for people who are interested in sitting on our Board. North Country Community Church serves Soup & Buns to Grande Prairie's less fortunate every Sunday from 2:00 - 3:00 pm through their Loaves & Fishes ministry. If you are interested in volunteering in that aspect please call the Church office at 780-532-0704 for more information.

Program Partners:



Rising Above Housing & Employment Initiative Contact Information:

www.risingabovegp.com

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