

Centre of Hope

Patron Description: Prepared by a Housing First Coordinator

Few Barriers:

E.P comes to the Centre of Hope a few times a month and puts a few kind words in with the intake staff. He will ask for things like socks, his resume, a phone call, and just run a few things by the outreach worker regarding work opportunities. He is a working homeless man who lacks many resources and yet manages to maintain a small income through many different jobs throughout the year. His presence at the Centre is not felt for long periods of time but when he does enter, supports are given to him according to his needs.

Mid Range:

C.B is a patron at the Centre of Hope who has come in to access services on a more frequent basis recently. He smokes marijuana on a regular basis and is beginning to experiment with heavier drugs such as crack cocaine. C.B does use outreach services to maintain contact with family members outside of the city. He understands the importance of working and is trying to re-establish permanent, full time employment, but living in his vehicle along with his recent use of crack cocaine; the barriers are proven to be too high to overcome his own.

Many Barriers:

G.W is a long time patron of the Centre of Hope who has proven to have extremely high needs. This patron requires new clothes every time he comes into the Centre of Hope. He often needs assistance in the shower to bath him. Our new Housing First program has attempted to house this man in a variety of ways and it has taken numerous interventions to build and maintain supports around him. He continues to end up living on the streets of Fort McMurray or in the hospital with severe medical issues. He has a severe alcohol and solvent addiction as well, which he believes he will be unable to overcome. He claims that he was born on the street and that he will die on the street.

Barriers to results: Prepared by Centre of Hope's Intake Coordinator

D.B is a certified electrician. He came to us with limited barriers. He came from back east with the hopes that Fort McMurray's streets were paved with gold and jobs would be easy to find. He was not prepared for the housing situation and also the requirements for work. D.B was able to acquire his identification, birth certificate, social insurance number and government identification with the help of our workers. D.B also needed work boots and some clothing. He is now working at one of the oil companies and is doing well.

M.T came to the Centre with a broken heart. He had just received some family news that was very difficult. We made contact with his family and we were able to secure a bus ticket home. He returned to Fort McMurray and was able to maintain his job as a tradesman and is doing well.

R.B was from Venezuela looking for work. He was very emotional because he had no contact with his family because of the cost of phone calls. His mother was very ill and he had no way of calling her. He was in tears. Through the outreach team at the Centre he was able to call his mother and was so thankful for our generosity. R.B is now working and able to keep in touch with his family through his own means.

M.V needed assistance with a resume. He needed a haircut and that was it. He has found a job as a chef, and is doing well. He keeps in contact with us and is very grateful for the Centre.

C.S came to the centre 2 years ago. He was a micro biologist and once lived in Vancouver. Through his marriage breakup C suffered a nervous breakdown and somehow ended her in Fort McMurray. C.S was an alcoholic and then he turned to drinking mouthwash. His family tried many times to get him home but he could not be persuaded to go. His brother came to the centre from Vancouver many times a year trying to get him to come home. Staff became good support for C.S and he became part of our Centre of Hope 'family'. He had poor health and mental health issues. He has no trust. We eventually got him home to his family. They had a family doctor who was willing to help him through his difficulties and to assist him with a medical Detox. Treatment was lined up for C.S. Unfortunately, he died 6 months after going home. The doctor's told his family the years of alcoholism and solvent use destroyed all his major organs. His family remains in contact with the Centre of Hope. They are grateful they had time with him, although it was a short time. He died surrounded by family who loved him.

T.M had been coming to the Centre for many years. We watched him deteriorate daily. He was a tradesman but his addiction was his pal. We helped him with identification, work boots, work clothes, ride to detox and hospital. Treatment came to him through the scare of going to court and not knowing how to handle the situation. He decided treatment may be the answer. He did go to long term treatment and has been sober for 1 year and is working in Calgary and doing really well. His health has improved 10 fold. He came back to Fort McMurray to 'face' the courts and was held accountable and took responsibility of his court judgement. He is now doing volunteering in Calgary with a senior's complex and has been doing well.

O.S came to the Centre 3 years ago. He had an addiction problem and was ready to meet it head on. He first contacted his family to let them know that he was OK and that he had a problem and was willing to 'deal' with it. We had arranged treatment in Saskatchewan and he has been clean and sober since. He still calls to check in with 'mom'. Our Chronic homeless have many more under lining issues. C.C has been at the Centre for many years and we watch her deteriorate daily. Her health is very poor. She is one of our generational homeless patrons. She has been on the street for most of her life. She has been abused beyond what we could imagine. Her mental health is on the downslide because of her addiction. We work with her daily. We work daily at keeping her fed, warm, clothed and loved. She has begun to build trust with us but that has taken many tears. We believe that if we continue to love her where she

is at she will make the choices she needs to become a healthier person. We advocate with her at the hospitals and other agencies because she cannot do things without support and someone to help her to understand what is required of her. We have advocated with her and her children. It has been intense process but we are always there for her. C.C has a long road ahead of her but she will succeed.

G.W is another generational homeless patron. He is addicted to alcohol and mouthwash. It's a shame that mouthwash with alcohol is so easily accessible and legal. We have watched him go to treatment, come back to Fort McMurray another man, and shortly after arriving he is back to his addiction and homeless way of life. He is a survivor! We have advocat3ed for him through agencies in town, hospital, detox, medical profession, and many other situations. He feels his life has no meaning so why not dies on the street with his friends. He is a sweet man with such an attraction and love for his addiction, it is sad to watch. We are him family. We feed him, keep him warm, clothe him, and help him with his daily needs. He has been housed but unsuccessfully but then again, 1 week of being housed is a success for him. It's hard for someone who has been homeless for most of his life to know how to live in a home. A roof over his head was a new concept. He is life a caged animal. His need to be back on the street with his friends was a stronger urge than living in a safe place. We keep an eye on him and do what we can. He has gained a great trust with us, and is doing the best that he can do at this time. G.W is greatly in need of someone to come along side of him and just listen. ...that is what we do....we meet him where he is at, and help from there.