



RECLAIMING LIVES, EMPOWERING FUTURES

Oxford House

Homes For Recovery

Annual Report
2022 – 2023

OUR MISSION
TO PROVIDE PEOPLE
IN RECOVERY FROM
ADDICTIONS,
A SUPPORTIVE
PROGRAM AND SAFE
HOME TO ACHIEVE
A PRODUCTIVE,
REWARDING, CLEAN
SOBER LIFE.

We believe in the goodness, dignity and potential of men and women with alcohol and drug addiction and that, by providing them with safe and affordable housing, they will have the best opportunity for full, long-term recovery.

OUR VISION
INDIVIDUALS IN
RECOVERY ARE
EMPOWERED TO TAKE
RESPONSIBILITY FOR
THEMSELVES AND
THRIVE IN EVERY
ASPECT OF THEIR
LIVES.

**202
days**

**AVERAGE STAY IN AN
OXFORD HOUSE HOME**

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



The Transformative Power of Peer Support in Oxford House's Transitional Housing

OXFORD HOUSE'S TRANSITIONAL HOUSING stands out for its transformative power of peer support, making it a game-changer in addiction recovery. This unique approach leverages communal support and shared experiences to empower residents on their journey to recovery. By weaving peer support throughout the program, Oxford House offers a safe and nurturing environment where residents feel understood and validated, free from judgment and stigma.

One of the greatest benefits of peer-supported recovery is the sense of shared understanding and empathy. Within their Oxford House Transitional home, residents find solace in witnessing the transformation of their roommates, inspiring them to believe in their own ability to overcome challenges. Hope becomes tangible and accessible, offering a new perspective on the recovery journey.

Experienced residents who have triumphed in their own recovery journeys serve as invaluable guides and role models. They provide practical advice, coping strategies, and personal insights that shape a stronger foundation for long-term recovery and personal growth. Regular meetings, check-ins, and mutual encouragement establish accountability and support among residents, preventing isolation and strengthening resilience.

The supportive environment of peer-supported recovery also addresses feelings of isolation and misunderstanding that residents may have experienced before joining the program. Acceptance and understanding without judgment create a sense of community and belonging within Oxford House. Even after leaving Transitional Housing, residents continue to support one another, providing a vital lifeline for maintaining recovery, navigating challenges, and preventing relapse.

Message *from the* Chair



Linda McCollum
Chair of the Board

OXFORD HOUSE
FOUNDATION
Board of Directors

Linda McCollum
Retired
CHAIR

Joanna Scott
Vice President Corporate Services &
General Counsel
VICE CHAIR

Craig Burkart
CPA, CA, IFA, CFF, CIP
TREASURER

Edie Severight
Law Contracts Analyst Enbridge
and Alumni of Oxford House
SECRETARY

Rod Wilkinson
Retired
PAST CHAIR

Debra Johnstone
Retired (Partner at Cenara)
DIRECTOR

Gill Roussel
Program Manager, Brenda's House
DIRECTOR

Steven Law
DIRECTOR

Michael J Reed
DIRECTOR

Eve MacMillan
Retired Executive Director of
Sunrise Healing Lodge
HONORARY DIRECTOR

ON BEHALF of the Board of Directors, management and staff of Oxford House, I am pleased to present the 27th Annual Report. Through a year of uncertainty as the world emerged from the COVID pandemic the Oxford House team worked tirelessly to support individuals in various stages of recovery from addiction.

Addiction is a chronic health issue which devastates individuals and families. There are a variety of health services which endeavour to support addicts in their struggle. Oxford House's unique approach of combined peer-support and long-term residential stay has proven very effective in helping addicts to begin anew a clean and sober life.

Throughout the year, we've accomplished significant milestones that are enhancing both the efficiency and scope of our work. We crafted a comprehensive Strategic Plan that serves as our compass for the upcoming 3 to 5 years, revamped job descriptions, and established performance management protocols to amplify our organizational prowess and leadership capabilities. Moreover, we successfully secured licensing for a 20-bed Pre-Treatment Housing facility. Presently, we are embarking on the initial phases of innovative Fund Development and Communications & Marketing Plans.

In April last year Oxford House was awarded the contract to manage and operate the Recovery Coaches Alberta program, a pilot project funded by the provincial government. Management of the program provided us with the opportunity to promote our role as a leading organization in recovery services in Alberta. We successfully completed our role in the RCA program in March this year.

As anyone living in Alberta is reminded daily, there is an ever-worsening problem of mental illness, addiction and homelessness in our cities and towns. Oxford House Foundation responds to the issues of addiction and homelessness by providing safe, drug- and alcohol-free housing and treatment. April 1, 2022 to March 31, 2023, 217 individuals have left Oxford House clean and sober or stayed in residence. We invite you to get in touch with us for additional information and/or if you are able to assist with a contribution toward this critical work.

As we close another year of dedicated service to those individuals who need our support, I wish to thank the donors, members of the Board of Directors, the executive team and all the support workers who with determination and hard work provide the critical dedication and care so badly needed by individuals in recovery.

With gratitude,

Linda D McCollum
Chair, Oxford House Foundation

Message *from the* Executive Director



Earl Thiessen
Executive Director

AS WE REFLECT ON THE PAST YEAR, it's incredible to see how far we've come together. If the previous year was a whirlwind of planning for the future, then 2022-2023 was the year we rolled up our sleeves and turned those plans into action.

There were three significant areas that demanded our attention, and I'm excited to share the progress we've made. First and foremost, we successfully completed our strategic plan. This comprehensive roadmap will guide us over the next three to five years, focusing on enhancing both the non-financial and financial resilience and capacity of Oxford House. We're dedicated to enriching the resident experience in recovery, raising awareness about resident needs to foster recovery capital generation, advocating for the peer support model of recovery, and ensuring the utmost quality and safety of our Oxford House homes. It's a thrilling time for Oxford House as we step confidently into this exciting new phase.

The second milestone we achieved was the licensing of our Pre-Treatment homes, a significant accomplishment that was made possible through our partnership with Alberta Health Services. This collaboration has enabled us to extend our care to men and women who are on a waitlist for treatment. Our Pre-Treatment Housing model, which has been operating for several years, has been enhanced through licensing and funding. As a result, we were able to bring on board two dedicated Addictions Counsellors, along with a team of recovery coaches. These compassionate professionals and staff offer invaluable psychoeducation and recovery coach group sessions, as well as one-on-one relapse prevention support.

Lastly, our Capital Asset Management Study has been successfully concluded. We understand the importance of maintaining and improving our recovery homes, and this study has been instrumental in identifying properties in need of renovations. By estimating costs and prioritizing renovation schedules, we're better equipped to plan ahead and secure necessary funding through grant writing. Huge thanks to the Calgary Homeless Foundation for their invaluable support in making this accomplishment possible.

None of these achievements would have been possible without the steadfast support of our remarkable board and the unwavering dedication of our diligent staff. Their collective efforts have been pivotal in realizing these critical goals for Oxford House over the past year.

To our valued donors, funders, volunteers, staff, and agency partners, we extend our heartfelt gratitude. Your contributions have played an essential role in creating a seamless continuum of care for the brave men and women seeking recovery from substance use. Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and the community as a whole.

As we look ahead, let us do so with a sense of accomplishment and renewed determination. There is much more to be achieved, and with your continued support, we are confident that Oxford House will continue to thrive and impact lives positively.

Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.

Earl Thiessen
Executive Director, Oxford House

“ Together, we are making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and the community as a whole. ”

Enhancing Indigenous Recovery through Cultural Supports

Thanks to the Civil Society Grant, we are now able to offer even more intentional cultural assistance in collaboration with Indigenous communities in Treaty 6 and 7 territories.

This support includes engaging in ceremonies, elder sharing and healing circles, sweat lodges, house naming ceremonies, and annual feasts.

Our healing and teaching circles, facilitated by elders, provide a safe space for Indigenous men and women to engage in group discussions and to enrich their spiritual journey through traditional healing practices. Additionally, individuals are invited to take part in sweat lodge ceremonies.

To date, we have established connections with seven elders from Treaty 6 and 7. These elders play a crucial role in providing oral cultural support to our residents throughout their healing journey, allowing residents to express their current stage of progress and future plans.

Witnessing the healing that takes place through these circles and sweat lodges brings us great joy. The value derived from cultural supports cannot be understated.

Recovery Coaches of Alberta: *Enhancing Recovery Capital*

Oxford House, in collaboration with the Government of Alberta, spearheaded the pilot project for Recovery Coaches of Alberta. This initiative focused on training and providing recovery coach services to individuals seeking support.

Additionally, Oxford House secured funding to train its program staff as Recovery Coaches, resulting in significant benefits for our residents.

During this period, six dedicated support staff administered 97 BARC-10 surveys, conducted 22 Recovery Coach Sessions, facilitated 7 recovery connections, and established 32 Community Connections.

The BARC-10 results affirm that residents possess adequate recovery capital, supported by barrier-free access to recovery coaches for continuous assistance and the advancement of their recovery journey.

Oxford House offers our heartfelt appreciation to the Government of Alberta and the Civil Society Fund for their invaluable support in these transformative endeavors.



Photos: South House naming ceremony.

“ Being part of Oxford House has taught me that we are not alone in our journey. We have a network of individuals who understand our struggles and are there to help us lend a helping hand. It’s a beautiful reminder that we are stronger together. ”

– Oxford House Resident



Oxford House *community support*



▲ 15 year chip: In March 2023, Jerron, Tracey and Diana celebrated Colin's 15 year chip with him at Simon House's graduation event.



▲ Queen's Jubilee: Earl received the Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal on September 27, 2022. Featured in photo Earl and his wife Karina Thiesen.

OCJ OH prep for homeless dinner:
Featured in photo Earl Thiesen
and Lauren Healey preparing gift
packages for OCJ's and Oxford
House's homeless dinner in
December 2022. ▼



▲ Rick Armstrong, OCJ and Brian McGrath, ORCA: Earl Thiesen poses with Rick Armstrong, executive director and founder of OCJ and Brian McGrath of ORCA at the Recovery Capital Conference in Medicine Hat, Alberta.



▲ Shoeboxes for ladies: A huge shout out to Apisha and the Calgary Shoe Box Project for their donation of Christmas shoeboxes for each female resident of Oxford House.



▲ CHF Doug and Jolene: Calgary Homeless Foundation System Planners Jolene Fawcett & Doug Cheke pose by the tree after a meeting about our funded HMIS Specialist position at Oxford House.

Agency Connections

Alberta Works
 Alcove
 Aventa
 Calgary Alpha House Society
 Calgary Dream Centre
 Calgary Drug Treatment Court
 Calgary Food Bank
 Claresholm Centre for Mental Health & Addictions
 Foothills Detox Centre
 Fresh Start Recovery Society
 Grace House Drumheller Society for Recovery
 Henwood Residential Treatment Program
 Jellinek Society
 Lander Treatment Centre
 Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment Centres
 Prospect Career LINKS
 Recovery Acres – Addictions Treatment & Counselling Centre
 Renfrew Recovery Centre Addiction Services
 Simon House Recovery Society
 Sunrise Healing Lodge



▲ Filming of our commercial: Having a blast at the filming of Oxford House's commercial with John M, Oxford House alumnus.

Jerron drops off donation at Alpha House. ▼





Miguel's Journey

Overcoming Addiction and Finding Hope

LIFE'S JOURNEY can take us down unexpected paths, and for Miguel, it was a winding road filled with struggles, addiction, and the pursuit of purpose. Originally from Maskwacis, his childhood was marked by constant relocations, trauma, and the challenges of making new friends in each new place. Amidst family difficulties and a strained relationship with his father, Miguel found solace in substances, leading him down a destructive path.

As a teenager, Miguel's life took another turn when he moved to the city with his father, carrying the emotional baggage of their troubled history. He started experimenting with alcohol, and as time passed, he progressed to harder drugs like pot and ecstasy. **"At the time, I guess you could say I was a functioning addict. I'd go to work, come back home and start drinking."** It wasn't long before Miguel was using cocaine. He managed to maintain some semblance of normalcy, but the allure of drugs and alcohol consumed his weekends and personal life.

The turning point in Miguel's story came when he received a DUI at 27 years old, a wake-up call that made him rethink his life choices. He had been drinking the whole night and was on his way to score some cocaine when he hit a tree. This happened about a block away from a very busy road. He was grateful, because otherwise he may have hurt himself or someone else. He decided to stop using cocaine but found himself drinking even more heavily.

Throughout his twenties, Miguel sought help from a psychologist to address his suicidal ideations, attempting to cope with his addiction issues while still using substances. Miguel wasn't happy, and he knew something had to change. **"I wanted to change, and I decided to eliminate the one thing that I thought at the time was the cause of my unhappiness. My job, it just wasn't for me."**

Feeling lost and unhappy, Miguel realized that a job change was necessary. He decided to pursue his passion for helping others, particularly kids facing struggles similar to his own. He obtained his diploma in Addictions and Community Service Work with honors, but despite his determination, the COVID pandemic hindered job opportunities, leading to a downward spiral of heavy drinking.

Realizing that he couldn't effectively work in the addictions field while battling his own addiction, Miguel sought help at Poundmaker's Treatment Centre, where he learned about Oxford House. This safe haven provided him with structure and routine to aid in his recovery journey. Miguel credits Tim G, a lead support worker in Edmonton, for making all the difference.

"I am so grateful Oxford House exists, that there is a place for people in recovery to live. The rules help people get into a routine and this works great for people trying to better themselves. But at the end of the day, for me, it was Tim who made all the difference. I'm very picky about people and especially within recovery. He's a very good human and it's obvious he cares about people."

With a year of sobriety under his belt, Miguel felt ready to move on from Oxford House and started working in a harm reduction facility. However, witnessing the pain of others proved too emotionally taxing for him, so he took leave from his job. He did try to go back after his leave, but it didn't work out. **"I really wanted to help people, but it hurt me too much to see them hurt themselves. I'm not a believer in harm reduction anymore."**

Then in the summer of last year, Miguel relapsed, leading him to lose his apartment and face more challenges. He felt ashamed. Seeking help from his psychologist and holding on to hope, Miguel reached out to Tim once more.

Tim told him he could get him into a house within the week, but Miguel would have to do just one thing or Tim wouldn't be able to help him. He had to quit drinking. Miguel did not go drinking, he had been given hope. And he was doing fine, getting the alcohol out of his system. But as often happens, he was tempted during that week by a friend who put a mickey of Vodka on the table in front of him. Miguel mustered up his strength and told his friend he couldn't drink. He was determined to stay sober.

"And I am so thankful I didn't drink. I'm back at Oxford House now and doing well. I'm living in a house with a group of guys that make all the difference." Surrounded by supportive housemates, he navigated through a difficult job search and eventually secured a position working with children at the City of Edmonton. This marked the beginning of his dream to help young people facing adversity.

Miguel firmly believes in the power of surrounding oneself with the right people and positive support systems and can't say enough about the support he received from Tim. **"Tim has a way of making you believe in yourself."** When Miguel tries to credit Tim for where he's at, Tim always tells him that Miguel is where he is, because of the choices he's made.

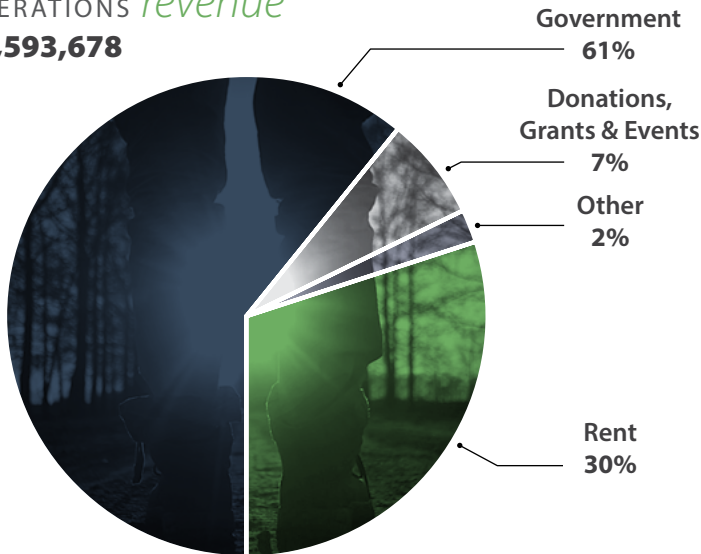
Miguel's advice to others struggling with addiction is to prioritize their own well-being, seek help, and be patient with themselves. He goes on to say, **"And if what they're doing to help themselves doesn't work for them, they should try something else like therapy. It's really hard to overcome your addictions and lots of people give up because it hurts too much to deal with their wounds. Life has its ups and downs regardless of who you are, there are always going to be bad times. In those times, it's good to hang on to hope and have someone to lean on."**

Miguel's story is a testament to the resilience of the human spirit and the potential for transformation when surrounded by support and hope. His journey reminds us that no matter how difficult life may seem, with determination and the right support system, it is possible to find a path towards healing and thriving.

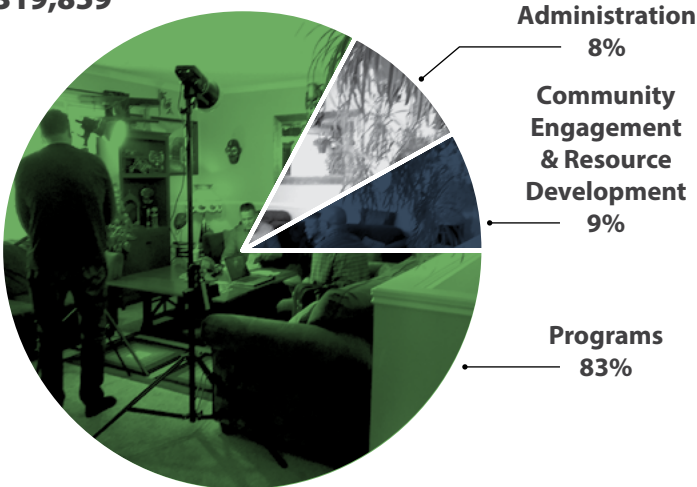
Oxford House *financials*

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

OPERATIONS *revenue*
\$2,593,678



OPERATIONS *expenses*
\$2,319,859



AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.



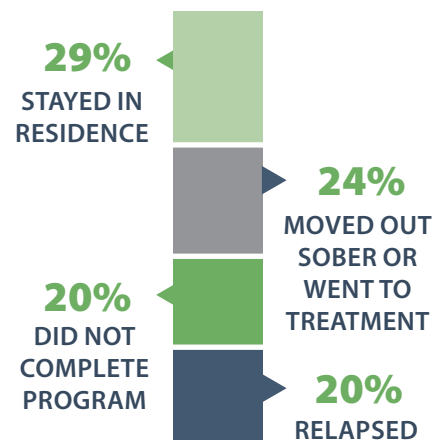
▲ Red Woman House Tour: Earl and Honorable Jackie-Armstrong Homeniuk, MLA.

“ So very grateful for the peer support I’ve grown to have with the people in Oxford house, both the residents and the office staff.” ”

– Oxford House Resident

Program Outcomes

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023



OXFORD HOUSE IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT FROM



Thank you *from the* Oxford House Team

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every donor below for playing an indispensable role in transforming lives. Your unwavering support has been a beacon of hope, illuminating the path to recovery for those in need. Through your generosity, 32 men and women found solace and strength within the walls of Oxford House, a safe haven that became their home.

Your compassion has not only provided a home but also sowed the seeds of change, helping individuals embrace sobriety and embark on a journey of healing. Your collective impact is immeasurable, and your kindness continues to ripple through countless lives.

With deepest appreciation,

Your Oxford House Team



Phyllis Aberle
Shirley Allen
Catherine Arcand
Pamela Armstrong
Brock Bodnar
Craig Burkart
Janice Clark
Noel Coughlan
Mike Donovan
Alfreda Duffy
Eric Engler
Suzanne Hayes

Karen Heron
Conrad & Barb Hild
Debra Johnstone
Lolita Klimack
C. Lafleur
Donald Lloyd
Cec and Linda Lukenbill
Dick Mabee
Eve MacMillan
Bruce McCollum
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Michael Pashelka
Edward Scheibelhut
Val Scholefield
Diana Schwenk
Joanna Scott
Neil Shepherd
Lynda Smith
Doug Straus
Taylor Toller Memorial
Fund at the Calgary
Foundation

Earl Thiessen
Debbie Toole
Kenneth and Brenda Trost
Tracey Twitney
Kim Walmsley
Ralph Watson
Helen Webster
Melanie Wells
Rod Wilkinson
Wisc Association

“ Oxford House offered me affordable housing in a secure environment, surrounded by housemates who, like me, were on the path to recovery from addiction. With no time constraints, I could stay as long as I abided by the house rules. I had the freedom to leave when I felt prepared to take the next step towards by own independent living. ”

– Past Oxford House Resident

406 individuals were served at Oxford House

APRIL 2022 – MARCH 2023

68%
MALE

32%
FEMALE

33%
INDIGENOUS

77%
REFERRALS FROM TREATMENT
AND DETOX CENTRES

202
AVERAGE DAYS
STAYED



DONATE

<https://oxfordhouse.ca/support-addiction-recovery/>



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APPLY FOR HOUSING

<https://oxfordhouse.ca/sober-living-alberta/>

**Oxford
House**

Homes For Recovery

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