

# SEED NEWS

WINTER 2019

## Our Mission

To build hope and well-being for our most vulnerable citizens through Jesus' love.

*Your support has provided a safe place for our guests to call home and a warm meal when they needed it most.*

35 YEARS  
HOPE GROWS HERE

THE  
MUSTARD  
SEED

# MERRY CHRISTMAS!

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



**D**o you have a favourite Christmas song that gets stuck in your head, and before you know it you are humming, whistling or singing it? For me it's the song 'Sleigh Ride.' I learned a few months ago that when a song gets into your mind and you can't get it out it's called an earworm.

However, many of our clients are not humming, whistling, or singing Sleigh Ride this winter as the idyllic picture of rosy cheeks, and lovely weather for a sleigh ride together with you is foreign to their experience. In fact, over 80 people last year died of over-exposure to the cold in Canada and the numbers will not change much this year unless we do something about it.

This past year, lives, including those of Emily, Kris and Cheryl in this newsletter, were saved because of the shelters The Mustard Seed ran in each of the cities we serve.

Some people say that we should no longer need shelters and should have a home for everyone who is homeless, and I agree, but there are multiple reasons why we can't do this. Sometimes it's because we don't have affordable supportive housing available. Other times it's because those who are homeless do not have the skills to live on their own, or the awareness of what services are available to them. This is why we offer a variety of services and programs such as counseling, employment, chaplaincy, and housing in our shelters in the various communities in which we operate.

I hope and pray that this Christmas season is full of love, hope, and joy for you and your family. I would ask that you consider making a donation to the work we do so others might experience the same love, hope, and joy this Christmas!

**Stephen Wile, EdD**  
Chief Executive Officer

**"FOR TO US A CHILD IS BORN, AND TO US A SON IS GIVEN...  
AND HE WILL BE CALLED WONDERFUL COUNSELOR, MIGHTY  
GOD, EVERLASTING FATHER, PRINCE OF PEACE."**

**— ISAIAH 9:6-7**



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## CHERYL & KRIS FIND RESPIRE AT THE MUSTARD SEED

**W**hen Cheryl hopped on a bus that was bound for The Mustard Seed shelter with her son Kris, she was looking for a fresh start. She had no money, no job, and no place to live.

"I was so nervous because I didn't know what I would be facing when I got off the bus," says Cheryl.

After struggling for many years with addictions and homelessness, Cheryl desperately wanted to get away from her toxic past in order to provide a safe environment for her and Kris.

### A warm welcome

Cheryl called ahead to The Mustard Seed and asked if the shelter would take her and her son in. The staff encouraged them to come and assured them a spot would be reserved for them. Cheryl and Kris were grateful to be welcomed with smiles and without judgement, and to find that the shelter was accessible for Kris, who uses a wheelchair.

"Being here is so peaceful, everyone treated me with respect. People are so friendly here."

Cheryl says she has been happier and healthier since arriving at The Mustard Seed.

"In the past I would usually feel the need to use, but since coming here I haven't felt that urge. I have been clean for months now."

The shelter provided the safety and security that Cheryl and Kris needed until they could get back on their feet. It wasn't long before they found an affordable basement suite. They were thrilled to move into a place they could call home.



Cheryl & Kris giving back to The Mustard Seed by volunteering

### Giving back

Although Cheryl and Kris are no longer in need of the shelter, they return every day to volunteer with The Mustard Seed's drop-in program. They prepare lunches, wrap pastries, and stock bread.

"I told the staff who work here, you got us now forever; you can't get rid of us," chuckles Cheryl. "We love coming here. I also love that it helps Kris meet more people and make friends."

Cheryl's next goal is to find steady employment. She hopes to work in retail, but whatever job she ends up with, she vows to always find time for volunteering at The Mustard Seed.

# 456

individuals are provided with a warm, safe place to sleep every night at The Mustard Seed shelters



**Thanks to your generous support, we were able to provide shelter for Cheryl and Kris when they needed it most. Your continued partnership is so appreciated as we serve our communities' most vulnerable across all our Mustard Seed locations.**



# FROM SURVIVING TO THRIVING

**"THANKFULLY, THERE WAS ALWAYS  
SOMEBODY AT THE MUSTARD SEED THAT  
CAME AND SAVED MY LIFE."**

**— EMILY**

Photo of Emily reflecting on her  
journey at the 1010 Centre

# EMILY'S JOURNEY

## FINDING A PLACE TO CALL HOME

Emily's journey with The Mustard Seed started when she was 14 years old after she ran away from an abusive home.

"We would go over there, and utilize the showers, and the clothes, and the dinners, lunches, and stuff that they had going on. Sometimes it was just a place to go and chill," Emily says. She recalls the space being a safe place for anyone and everyone. "They didn't make you feel less at any time."

### Planning for success

After a period of incarceration, Emily met with Chaplain Debbie through The Mustard Seed's reintegration program. Together, they planned an exit strategy for Emily to be successful upon her release.

"(Debbie) got me in touch with Donna (a Mustard Seed Advocate) who heard my story and was like 'we can help you.' I didn't want to get out and go to a shelter. I knew if I did, I would end up relapsing and things would just go bad and downhill."

Through her determination, and willingness to allow The Mustard Seed staff to assist her, Emily successfully transitioned to The Mustard Seed's 1010 Centre, where she now has permanent supportive housing and access to the resources she needs to thrive.

### Building community

Emily is part of the 1010 Centre's Tenant Board where she helps advocate for her fellow residents and assists with the issues and activities in the building. When she isn't socializing or working, you can find her volunteering at The Mustard Seed Support Centre Coffee House.

"For somebody that didn't have the happiest childhood or life, I still stand a survivor, and it's because of the fact that when it came down to it, thankfully, there was always somebody at The Mustard Seed that came and saved my life."



## THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Emily was able to overcome a cycle of homelessness and find housing.

Learn how you can help others like Emily by visiting [TheSeed.ca](http://TheSeed.ca) today.

# 224

permanent supportive housing units  
are provided for individuals in need  
at the 1010 Centre.



The 1010 Centre



## BUILDING TRUST PARTNERSHIP REMOVES BARRIERS TO ASSISTANCE

Mustard Seed guest  
sitting with his dog

If you own a pet, chances are you consider them a part of your family. The same is true for many of our most vulnerable citizens. Often, individuals experiencing homelessness and poverty hesitate to seek services because they don't know what will become of their pet, and they're not willing to risk separation from their loved one.

Thankfully Four Paws Food Bank founder Bonnie connected with Jeff, an Advocate and Outreach Centre Supervisor at The Mustard Seed. They talked about how the two organizations could work together to ensure guests with pets felt comfortable seeking the help they needed without fear of losing their pet. A partnership was formed, and now, the team from Four Paws hosts a weekly pet food bank for The Mustard Seed guests and their furry friends.

"We believe every family deserves to keep the pets they love even through hard times," says Four Paws Founder Bonnie. "The work we do with The Mustard Seed is helping to change lives for both animals and their owners."

### Self-care begins with pet-care

The impact has been even bigger than first imagined. Staff members are seeing firsthand how guests are able to take better care of themselves because they know their pet is being cared for. "What is most surprising to us is the number of seniors we work with," Bonnie says. "We had a senior man who was homeless and was so scared to ask for help because he didn't want to part with his two cats who were 11 and 13 years old. Through building trust and finding solutions, we are seeing more and more people seek the help they need because they know their animal will be cared for while they secure stable housing through organizations like The Mustard Seed."

Jeff says the program has helped those who were on the fence about using the mat program get out of the cold and into a warm place.

"When we had our Winter Refuge Mat program last year, Four Paws was there to ensure the pets of our guests were cared for and not left out in the cold," says Jeff. "This brought peace of mind for those we serve in at least one area of their lives."

# GOOD NEWS, THE MUSTARD SEED IS IN MEDICINE HAT!



The Medicine Hat  
Open House

**O**n September 16, The Mustard Seed officially celebrated its merger with the Medicine Hat Champion Centre and River Valley Community Church Oasis Café at an open house event. Over 300 Medicine Hat residents attended the open house, learning more about The Mustard Seed and its plans to develop a Wellness & Family Resource Centre in their city!

"Both the Champion Centre and Oasis Café have been pivotal supports for individuals facing poverty in Medicine Hat," says Steve Wile, The Mustard Seed CEO. "We are blessed to continue this ministry as partners and look forward to a future full of opportunity."

At the event, it was also announced that in October 2019, Hope Street Compassionate Ministry Centre will be joining our organization – becoming the third agency in the city to partner with The Mustard Seed!

"The Mustard Seed is excited to have Hope Street join our merger," says Dean Kurpijweit, Executive Team Member of The Mustard Seed. "We are pleased that three agencies are now part of The Mustard Seed in Medicine Hat. We believe that this will result in clients being better served and more efficiencies in service delivery."

These exciting new partnerships, now collectively known as The Mustard Seed Medicine Hat, will provide those experiencing poverty and homelessness with better access to resources that can assist them in setting healthy goals, making sustainable life change, and moving towards a life of wellness and independence. Our organizations' shared mission and faith-based values, make for an ideal partnership and promising future!

**Champion Centre...** has provided shelter, basic services, and a breakfast program to those in need for over 13 years.

**Oasis Café...** has offered individuals food programming and community drop-in space for eight years.

**Hope Street CMC...** has provided the community with food, clothing, and chaplaincy services for 15 years.



The Oasis Cafe



The Champions Centre

# Not everyone gets wrapped up in the holiday spirit.

Provide a Christmas meal and refuge from the cold for only \$3.51. Donate today at [TheSeed.ca/Winter](https://TheSeed.ca/Winter)



TheSeed.ca

## CALGARY

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102 11 Ave SE, Calgary, AB  
p. 403.269.1319 | e. [Info@theseed.ca](mailto:Info@theseed.ca)

**Calgary Shelter**  
7025 44 St SE, Calgary, AB  
p. 403.723.9422 | e. [Info@theseed.ca](mailto:Info@theseed.ca)

**Neighbour Centre**  
#24 6060 Memorial Dr NE, Calgary, AB

## EDMONTON

**Community Support Centre**  
10568 114 St, Edmonton, AB  
p. 780.426.5600 | e. [InfoEdmonton@theseed.ca](mailto:InfoEdmonton@theseed.ca)

**96th Street Building**  
10635 96 Street, Edmonton, AB

**Neighbour Centre**  
10050 81 Ave NW, Edmonton, AB

**Mosaic Centre**  
12758 Fort Road, Edmonton, AB

## RED DEER

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6002 54 Ave, Red Deer, AB  
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## MEDICINE HAT

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