

**THE JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY'S
PROGRAMS**

**JOHN HOWARD SOCIETY OF ALBERTA
1999**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|---|
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS AND EX-OFFENDERS | 1 |
| Institutional Visitation | 1 |
| Pre-Release Planning | 1 |
| Counselling/Intake Services | 2 |
| Community Assessment | 2 |
| Community/Parole Supervision Programs | 2 |
| Literacy/Vocational Programs | 2 |
| Alternative Learning Program | 2 |
| Supportive Job Search Program | 2 |
| Learning Education Enhancement Program (LEEP) | 3 |
| Choices Substance Abuse Program | 3 |
| Bedford House | 3 |
| Life Management Program | 3 |
| Release Support Program | 3 |
| 101st Street Apartments | 3 |
| Independence Apartments | 4 |
| Satellite House | 4 |
| Living Skills Service - Attendance Centre | 4 |
| Communicating Anger in Relationships (C.A.R.E.) | 4 |
| Community Re-integration Program (C.R.P.) | 4 |
| Renaissance Program | 4 |
| Comeback | 4 |
| Transportation Service | 5 |
| Relapse Prevention and Anger Management Education | 5 |
| PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS | 5 |
| Young Offender Outreach | 5 |
| Howard House | 5 |
| Community Youth Worker | 5 |
| Red Deer Youth Residential Centre | 5 |
| Youth Advocacy | 6 |
| Youth Advocacy and Support | 6 |
| Alberta Youth in Care and Custody Network (A.Y.I.C.C.N.) | 6 |
| Victim-Young Offender Reconciliation Program | 6 |
| Youth Justice Committees | 6 |

| | |
|---|----|
| PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES OF OFFENDERS | 7 |
| Transportation Program | 7 |
| Family Support Program | 7 |
| Family Information Services | 7 |
| Community Intake | 7 |
| COMMUNITY PROGRAMS | 7 |
| General | 7 |
| Community Education | 7 |
| Crossing the Divide (CtD) | 8 |
| Victims' Assistance Program | 8 |
| Parenting After Separation Program | 8 |
| GAME - Gambling Awareness Mobile Education | 8 |
| Crime Prevention Roundtable | 8 |
| Youth | 8 |
| Criminal Justice Education Programs | 8 |
| Alternatives to Violence Education Program for Youth (AVEPY) | 8 |
| GYG - Group of the Young Generation | 8 |
| S.A.F.E.S.T. - Support, Advocacy, Friendship, Esteem Services for Teens | 9 |
| School Reintegration Program | 9 |
| Seminar - Youth Culture and Crime | 9 |
| Youth Outreach Worker Program | 9 |
| CONCLUSION | 9 |
| APPENDIX A | 10 |

INTRODUCTION

The John Howard Societies in Alberta are community-based agencies which recognize that the problem of crime and its prevention is as much the responsibility of the community as it is of government. The core values generally accepted by the Societies are: 1) that each individual has inherent dignity and intrinsic worth and must be treated fairly and compassionately; 2) that every person has the right to live in a safe, secure and peaceful environment; and 3) that since every person has the potential to become a responsible and worthy citizen, the individual as a person must always be accepted, while negative behaviour is rejected. Guided by these values the various societies play an active role in the criminal justice process by providing a variety of programs, to be detailed below, that can, for ease of reference, be categorized as 1) Programs for Offenders and Ex-Offenders, 2) Programs for Young Offenders, 3) Programs for Families of Offenders, and 4) Community Programs.

The John Howard Society also recognizes that without the support and time of volunteers many of these programs could not operate. All the John Howard Societies therefore have volunteer programs that place volunteers in a number of areas including courtwork, youth worker assistants, tutors, and leisure and recreational assistants.

PROGRAMS FOR OFFENDERS AND EX-OFFENDERS

Institutional Visitation

John Howard staff or volunteer representatives meet with incarcerated individuals in one-on-one or group settings and usually on a weekly basis. The meetings provide an opportunity for counselling and discussion with respect to a variety of matters including coping with life in the institution, planning for release and arranging for referrals to other agencies. Offered by the Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat John Howard Societies. Services provided by representatives from the Calgary and Lethbridge offices also extend to accessing bank accounts for inmates, picking up pay cheques and delivering personal belongings to the institution, explaining bail conditions to those granted bail and aiding in the location of potential cash or surety sources for those who are on bail status.

Pre-Release Planning

To provide inmates assistance in planning for their release. Offered by the Edmonton, Calgary and Lethbridge John Howard Societies. The Director of Community Services is used as the resource for pre-release planning. In Calgary, the Calgary Street Survival Guide is used as the resource for pre-release planning.

Counselling/Intake Services

To meet the needs of offenders in their readjustment to the community living, various services are provided by different John Howard Societies. Among the services provided are personal counselling offered by the Calgary, Edmonton, Medicine Hat, Lethbridge, and Red Deer John Howard Societies.

Community Assessment

To provide accurate and comprehensive assessments of the environment to which incarcerated inmates will be returning. Offered by the Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Medicine Hat John Howard Societies.

Community/Parole Supervision Programs

To provide effective supervision of inmates released on parole or statutory release. Counselling, referrals and ongoing support are provided in an effort to promote the development of adequate living skills. Offered by the Calgary, Edmonton, Medicine Hat and Red Deer Societies.

Literacy/Vocational Programs

To provide adults with an opportunity to enhance their reading and writing skills in an individualized learning program. It also encourages adults to develop an interest in the areas of personal, educational and vocational development. Further, it provides adults with empathetic, trained and supportive tutors who will assist them in their overall literacy growth. Both Edmonton and Calgary John Howard Societies offer a variety of literacy and vocational programs, and are mentioned below with a brief description of the program as it operates in its specific venue.

Alternative Learning Program. An education program for adults who wish to develop their educational, personal and work-related skills. The program is based on both the PLATO computer assisted learning system and group work. On-site instructors and tutors are available for the students. Offered by the Edmonton John Howard Society. The Calgary John Howard provides a similar service and entitles their program the Learning Opportunities Centre.

Supportive Job Search Program. An individually tailored job entry program which provides participants with the skills needed to choose, find and maintain employment. Offered by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Learning Education Enhancement Program (LEEP). LEEP is a job skill development program designed to assist persons in need of re-entering the workforce. It provides a comprehensive approach emphasizing life skills and interchangeable industry related skills. Training consists of classroom instruction and work site experience. Offered by the Calgary John Howard Society.

Choices Substance Abuse Program

A relapse prevention program to help keep offenders with alcohol and/or drug problems out of prison. Offered by the Calgary John Howard Society.

Bedford House

To provide residential-based treatment for offenders with particular psychiatric, psychological and/or emotional needs. Twenty-two men and women are accommodated in an 8-unit apartment building operated by the Calgary John Howard Society. Residents learn to live independently by addressing their clinical and social needs through participation in in-house programs and accessing other community resources.

Life Management Program

A psychotherapeutic group to assist ex-offenders to identify causes of dysfunctional behaviour and learn more effective ways of dealing with personal and interpersonal issues. It is a 32-session, 8-week program offered by the Calgary John Howard Society open to both the residents of Bedford House and other ex-offenders living in the community, other halfway houses or correctional day release centres.

Release Support Program

This program assists individuals with re-integration through a direct or referral service. The program services include addictions, employment/career, and personal counselling by members of the Calgary John Howard Society.

101st Street Apartments

A 34-bed halfway house for male offenders who are mentally ill, developmentally delayed or brain damaged. The men live in shared accommodation in apartments and are assisted in learning food preparation, menu planning and other skills that will prepare them for independent living. Special in-house programs include Communicating Anger in Relationships Effectively and the Community Reintegration Program, a basic life skills program for individuals with a mental illness. Operated by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Independence Apartments

A 24-bed halfway house for adult male offenders in an apartment block setting. Residents live in small groups in self-contained suites and are responsible for their own housekeeping, menu planning and food preparation. Operated by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Satellite House

A six-bed home for men with mental health illnesses. The focus of the house is to assist in building skills needed for independent living. Operated by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Living Skills Service - Attendance Centre

The John Howard Society of Edmonton in collaboration with Alberta Justice operates a living skills program for provincial inmates and probationers. The service is designed to assist clients to become pro-active community members by offering personal development and anger management programs.

Communicating Anger in Relationships (C.A.R.E.)

The Edmonton John Howard Society has a four week personal development program that focuses on teaching clients strategies in dealing with anger.

Community Re-integration Program (C.R.P.)

This program is designed for individuals with mental illness and teaching basic life skills, and is provide by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Renaissance Program

A group treatment program for men who abuse their partners. The program consists of 32 sessions over 16 weeks. The program is available upon self-referral or agency referral, or attendance may be court mandated. Offered by the Grande Prairie John Howard Society.

Comeback

A rehabilitative discussion group program for inmates is held every Monday evening at the Lethbridge Correctional Centre. Guest speakers from the community address relevant topics and discussion leaders encourage self-analysis and awareness. Includes regular meetings of HIV/AIDS Awareness, Women's AA, Narcotics Anonymous and Gambling Awareness. Appropriate videos enhance discussion. Offered by the Lethbridge John Howard Society in collaboration with local community agencies.

Transportation Service

For offenders who are still in correctional facilities but enrolled in educational or rehabilitative programs in the community, a transportation service is provided for them by the John Howard Society of Medicine Hat.

Relapse Prevention and Anger Management Education

Ten sessions for adults and youths are available to help individuals develop effective anger/feelings strategies. The program is offered by the Medicine Hat John Howard Society.

PROGRAMS FOR YOUNG OFFENDERS

Young Offender Outreach

Youth Support Volunteers assist young people in custody (open or closed) to identify and fill instrumental and/or emotional needs. Volunteers may assist in release planning, community resource access, recreation, education and counselling. This program is accessible to youth and community agencies by contracting the Calgary John Howard Society.

Howard House

Houses and provides programs for 12 male young offenders as an open custody facility. This is a group home setting which provides school, work experience, recreation and living skills programs. Operated by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Community Youth Worker

The Community Youth Worker program provides a transitional support service for young offenders aged 12-17 years from the Edmonton Young Offender Centre and Edmonton Group Homes. The program assist young people to reintegrate successfully into their families and communities as responsible members of society. The program aims to reduce the recidivism rate of young offenders. The program is offered by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Red Deer Youth Residential Centre

A 10-bed open custody group home for male young offenders who do not present a security concern to the community. Its program objectives are to increase the personal responsibility and decision making skills of young offenders. Residents are expected to become involved in educational work and personal development programs available in the community. Operated by the Red Deer John Howard Society.

Youth Advocacy

Youth Advocacy and Support. This program is an array of services designed for and by young persons aged 12 to 18 to increase accountability for themselves and to the criminal justice system. Referrals for those who are hardest to service are accepted from the community, including parents, young persons, probation officers, youth court officials, police, teachers and institutional staff. Services include advocacy and mediation services. Advocacy includes the support of staff and volunteers at the Calgary Young Offender Centre and in the community addressing such needs as employment, housing and access to social and legal services.

Alberta Youth in Care and Custody Network (A.Y.I.C.C.N.). A program offered by the Calgary John Howard Society which works to improve services for youth in care and make the Child Welfare System accountable for their actions. The program is an advocacy program run by youths for youths.

Victim-Young Offender Reconciliation Program

In the Victim-Young Offender Reconciliation Program, young offenders meet face-to-face with their victims to discuss their offence and form an agreement to reconcile the offence. Victims and offenders meet face to face in a safe environment to discuss the offending behaviour and generate solutions that will serve to repair the harm caused. Where appropriate, other individuals affected by the incident will be offered the opportunity to be involved in this process. Offered by the Red Deer John Howard Society and the Calgary John Howard Society as a component of mediation services.

Mediation services are available to individuals who wish to take a more accountable position regarding their behaviour and those who have been victimized by such behaviour. Mediation services encompass the Victim/Offender Reconciliation Program (VORP).

Youth Justice Committees

Youth Justice Committees/Societies are community-based alternatives to the formal court system which involves volunteers working with young offenders and their families, victims and community members to find meaningful consequences for the youth. The Committees are in operation at the Calgary and Medicine Hat John Howard Societies.

PROGRAMS FOR FAMILIES OF OFFENDERS

Transportation Program

This program encourages the preservation of community and family support systems through the facilitation of regular contact with family and friends. Volunteer drivers provide transportation to and from the Calgary Correctional Centre, Calgary Young Offender Centre and Bow River Correctional Centre to facilitate inmate visitation. This service is provided on a bi-monthly basis to those who would otherwise not be able to visit due to lack of public transportation to the sites of the institutions. Offered by the Calgary John Howard Society.

Family Support Program

The Family Support program is a monthly support group for families of offenders. Two groups are offered: one for parents, and one for spouses. Offered by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Family Information Services

To provide information about the criminal justice system to families of incarcerated or charged individuals. Offered by the Lethbridge John Howard Society.

Community Intake

Provides referrals, support and assistance to families of offenders. Offered by the Red Deer John Howard Society.

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

General

Community Education. Each of the John Howard Societies is engaged, through workshops, seminars, debates, presentations and media interviews, in public education programs. Each aims: to educate the community about the criminal justice system and encourage alternatives to incarceration; to facilitate understanding of community responsibility in both the incidence of crime and the manner in which society responds to it; and promote a better understanding of and provide factual information about the criminal justice system.

Crossing the Divide (CtD). A wilderness program overseen by the Calgary John Howard Society that provides back-country experiences to youth and adults who would not normally have access to such opportunities due to life experiences. The program places emphasis on eco-education, personal challenge, inter-personal skill building and fun.

Victims' Assistance Program. Court Support Workers assist victims and witnesses of crime as they go through the court process. Ongoing support, information on court procedures and referrals are provided. Offered by the Edmonton John Howard Society.

Parenting After Separation Program. This program has two to three hour sessions, once per week which focus on providing parents with information after separation or divorce. The program looks at the affects of separation on children and parents, legal issues and explores ways to continue positive parenting after separation. It a program offered by the John Howard Society in Grand Prairie.

GAME - Gambling Awareness Mobile Education. The Lethbridge John Howard Society staff speak to groups in the community to raise awareness about gambling and its consequences.

Crime Prevention Roundtable. A crime prevention through social development (CPSD) initiative working towards the implementation of CPSD in the Lethbridge region. The Crime Prevention Roundtable is comprised of a group of community agencies and interested individuals. Lethbridge John Howard Society forms the Secretariat of the Roundtable.

Youth

Criminal Justice Education Programs. Each of the John Howard Societies is actively involved in providing information to school children about the criminal justice system. The main objectives are to promote a better understanding of the criminal justice system and to facilitate community understanding about both the incidence of crime and the manner in which society responds to it.

Alternatives to Violence Education Program for Youth (AVEPY). AVEPY is a program to assist youth to come to a clearer understanding of violence and recognize their power to overcome it. The program consists of two full-day workshops lead by facilitators and volunteers. Offered by the Calgary John Howard Society.

GYG - Group of the Young Generation. A no cost drop-in program for adolescents between the ages to 14 to 18 who are interested in developing a support network of peers engaged in constructive recreational and educational experiences. Facilitated by youth, this program provides young people the opportunity to plan and undertake activities that they might not do normally. The intent is to have teens develop a sense of responsibility, control and success. Attendance is arranged by contacting Calgary John Howard Youth Services of the

GYG facilitator.

S.A.F.E.S.T. - Support, Advocacy, Friendship, Esteem Services for Teens. A ten week cost free group program for adolescents and their caregivers. Offered by the Edmonton John Howard Society in partnership with the Elizabeth Fry Society and the Parent Support Association. Young people experiencing difficulty in family or peer relationships may seek admittance or be referred to the group. The program is based on a psycho-educational/insight model with concurrent groups for caregivers and teens with crossover sessions. Referral is arranged through any of the partner agencies and attendance with a caregiver is not mandatory.

School Reintegration Program. To reintegrate potential or recent school leavers back into the regular school system. The student is assisted in recognizing and resolving personal development issues and academic assistance is provided. Offered by Grande Prairie John Howard Society.

Seminar - Youth Culture and Crime. To illustrate the effects of differential association as a factor in youth culture and crime, and to encourage the acceptance of the need for a multi-dimensional integrated community response to crime prevention through the use of "social bonding" techniques. Offered by the Lethbridge John Howard Society.

Youth Outreach Worker Program. A Medicine Hat John Howard Society staff provides contact, support, guidance and referrals to young persons in the downtown core, which will assist them in maintaining successful, proactive contact in the community and in reducing negative and/or antisocial behaviour.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing provides an outline of the various programs provided by the John Howard Societies of Alberta. It being meant only as an outline, the accompanying descriptions of the various programs were necessarily brief. Further information about any of the above programs is available and can be obtained from the John Howard Society offering the program in question.

APPENDIX A

John Howard Societies in Alberta

John Howard Society of Alberta

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John Howard Society of Edmonton

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John Howard Society of Grand Prairie

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