



Elizabeth Fry Newsletter

WITH FUNDING FROM:



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SPRING 2013

One Client's Story:

I have been in the court system since I was 12 years old due to my struggle with addiction. I was incarcerated on 3 different occasions. I attended 5 residential treatment programs and a detox centre and served 4 months at Algoma Treatment and Remand Centre. I began drinking at the age of 12 and doing drugs by the age of 14, which progressed into a dependency on OxyContin pills. I went on methadone for 3 years and while on it, I became addicted to crack/cocaine. I broke the law in order to get my next fix. I was lost, I hated myself, I was on the verge of losing my housing,

I lost the right to parent my daughter, and I was looking at 60 days jail time. I didn't think I would ever be able to turn my life around, but on July 14 of 2011, I attended a detox centre to come off methadone, pills and crack/cocaine and my legal matter was referred to the Community Support Court.

I chose the Elizabeth Fry Society to manage my case and began meeting with them once per week to work on my assessment and treatment plan for the court. I am so grateful to have had the support and counseling of the EFry staff during the 8 month process.

When I had questions, they were very helpful in finding out the answers. We were able to discuss goals and make plans for my future. Having the encouragement and guidance from EFry was a big part of my recovery and played a big part in shaping the person I am today. I was encouraged to start counselling to deal with the issues arising from my sexual abuse, which I had been running from for years; to get involved in my community, so I started volunteering at Nijkiwendidaa Anishnaabe Kwewag Services Circle; and to get back into music, which I truly love.

where I was. I believe going through the Community Support Court with EFry at my side, has been very beneficial. I'm done at court now and did not have to go to jail – jail is not a place of recovery. I think by having the option to stay in my community and continue this healing process kept me focused on growing in my recovery and achieving my goals. I just celebrated my 1 year anniversary of being clean and sober, I have my daughter back home full time and I'm enrolled at Fleming College in the Social Justice Worker Program.

I have come a long way from

I would like to help the women in our community who are supported by the Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough.

I would like to donate \$25_____ \$50_____ \$100_____ Other _____ Charitable Number: 129863379 RR0001

This information will be used to issue your tax receipt. Please print clearly.

Donor name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Postal Code: _____ Email: _____

Please make cheques payable to **Elizabeth Fry Society**

223C Aylmer St N, Peterborough, ON K9J 3K3

or donate online at www.efryptbo.org

THANK YOU FOR YOUR DONATION!

- I am interested in becoming an EFry Volunteer
- I would like to become a voting member of EFry



Message From Patricia Zimmer—Executive Director

The women seen by EFry for programming and support often have criminal activity connected to a history of addiction, abuse, mental health challenges, poverty, lack of education, job skills, and affordable childcare. Women prisoners are much less likely to re-offend than men (22% versus 59%). However, when women return to the Peterborough area following incarceration the availability of services to address a multiplicity of needs including dealing with the stigma of having a prison record, greatly impacts their rates of re-offense and re-incarceration. EFry's individual and group supports are tailored to women and focus on linking women to other services and social supports. In addition, our programs help enable women to acknowledge sources of strength within themselves and in solidarity with others.

Our programs work to prevent and ameliorate the criminalization of women and to rein-

tegrate women into our community. Despite declining crime rates, a harsher approach to crime is leading to increased incarceration. The number of women being imprisoned is increasing. Between 1997 and 2006, for instance, the number of women in federal prisons grew by 22%.¹

Women make up a greater share of those charged with property offences rather than violent offences. Women are too often criminalized for activities they regard as necessary for their survival, such that the vast majority of these crimes involve either fraud or theft under \$5,000.² Women are generally involved in the criminal justice system as victims of crime, not as individuals charged with criminal offences. Some women are charged with assault; despite research that shows most of these assaults are defensive acts against an abusive partner. A greater percentage of women than

men are imprisoned before their trial as women are often without community or familial support, are homeless and unemployed. When a mother is remanded to prison her children may be taken into care bringing undue hardship to her family which affects the whole community.

Our Pre-charge Diversion Program for first time female shoplifting offences is an invaluable program. It saves thousands of dollars in police and court time, provides an opportunity to reduce retail theft in our community and prevents hundreds of women from being criminalized and having a record that can prevent employment.

Our Court Support program is growing by leaps and bounds. In 2012 we were able to support 186 women.

In 2012 we served a total of 402 individual women at court and in our office. In our work

at Central East Correctional Centre our Prisoner Advocate meets with women, assisting them in connecting with lawyers, family and friends. In 2012, 626 one to one connections took place. The "Taking Control: Making Healthy Relationship Choices" program was offered 4 times throughout the year and 67 women attended from one to six sessions.

In 2012 we were successful in securing a 3 year Trillium grant. With the help of this funding we hired a part time Outreach/Volunteer Coordinator, Beth Dowell. We have had 3 successful Tag Day weekends and we are planning other fundraising events throughout the year.

All of this work would not be possible without the dedicated staff team at E Fry and the support of placement students from SSFC, and Trent University as well as our dedicated volunteers.

1. Pollack, S. 2009. 'You Can't Have it Both Ways': Punishment and Treatment of Imprisoned Women. Waterloo: Journal of Progressive Human Services.
2. Pollock, S. 2008. Locked In, Locked Out: Imprisoning Women in the Shrinking and Punitive Welfare State. Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University.

Trillium Grant Success!

It has been a year since we have instituted our projects and plans supported by the Trillium Foundation. We have recently been reflecting on this grant's impact on the agency and have the following successes to report:

More Volunteers:

Of our 34 volunteers, 26 are

new recruits thanks to our Outreach Coordinator Beth Dowell.

Outreach and Financial Sustainability:

Our Executive Director Patricia Zimmer is able to work full-time, allowing her more opportunity to write funding proposals and also get

involved in outreach.

EFry is actively involved in the Community Support Court including participating on its Steering Committee and Advisory Committee. We have been involved with the START Program (Support Team for Abuse Response Today) from the beginning and continue to sit on its

Steering Committee.

Increased Donations:

We increased our individual received donations by 30%—much more than anticipated.



Court Program Expansion

We have been providing court support for women for the past 5 years. The primary purpose of that support was to identify women attending court for the first time and providing them with information and assistance with the primary goal of reducing their anxiety. Once a relationship was established the court support worker might attend at future court appearances and direct the woman to duty counsel, sit with her in and outside the court room and refer her to EFry staff for counselling and/or programs that might be helpful to her and her situation.

Two years ago, Peterborough Criminal Court was declared one of the more con-

gested courts because of continuous remands and revolving door clients. Judges, Crowns and lawyers were all looking for new ways to improve the criminal court process. A new attitude started to emerge in support of court diversions to educational, therapeutic and empowering programs in the community to engage the person charged in a meaningful way and reduce the revolving door of recidivism.

In September of 2011, the "mental health" court called the Community Support Court was launched in an attempt to better meet the needs of repeat offenders of low level crimes who are regularly before the courts because of underlying issues; specifically drug addic-

tions and mental health issues. EFry was invited to aid in the establishment of this court and continues to be involved in the referrals, assessments, and treatment plans of its clients.

With the evolution of Peterborough's criminal court, our court work has been expanding. Along with supporting women through the process, we are negotiating diversions, advocating for women with lawyers and Crowns, and providing the necessary work for Community Support Court. In 2012, 186 women were supported by EFry at court. Of those 186, 55 (30%) had their matter concluded and of those 55, 78% received a diversion or a lessened sentence as a direct result of in-

volvement with EFry.

Until recently, all of these tasks were on the shoulders of one part-time staff person. Now, with funding from the Luke 4 Foundation, we have been able to hire a new staff person for our Women's Court Diversion Project. Lorie Fuentes is our new member of the court support team with Jordon now taking on the position of Court Case Manager.

This funding will allow us to provide meaningful support for more women, thereby reducing recidivism. .

Volunteering for EFry

We appreciate everything our volunteers do for us at EFry and more volunteers are always welcome. Volunteers mainly participate in our fundraising activities at Delta Bingo and Tag Days.

The Kawartha Bingo Sponsor's Association consists of 44 charities and non-profit organizations who participate in charitable fundraising at Delta Bingo.



Delta Bingo was one of the first of five pilot e-gaming sites launched in Ontario. It offers both electronic bingo terminals and traditional paper cards. Since the grand opening in December 2005, participating charities have raised more than \$8,000,000 for our community.

Have you tapped into the excitement of their new Tap Tix dispensers? With instant prizes of up to \$1800, these new machines have quickly become a favorite for many players.

Volunteering in charitable bingo requires training which is provided by Delta Bingo. The

next training session is April 21st at 9:30AM.

Delta Bingo is hosting a volunteer appreciation night and EFry will pay the admission price for our volunteers! Come and play bingo at Delta Bingo Wednesday April 24th at 7:15. There will also be a silent auction with proceeds going to Food For Kids. Please RSVP so we can buy tickets.

Tag Days have been one of



our most successful fundraising events. Thank you to our volunteers for making this such a success and thank you to the community businesses that have allowed us to collect donations from their patrons. Tagging locations have included both WalMarts, both NoFrills, Chapters, East City Foodland, Canadian Tire, Metro, Loblaw's Superstore, Farmboy and the Farmer's Market.

Next Tag Day: June 15

Please contact Beth if you are interested in volunteering. 705-749-6809

Financial Literacy Program in the Works

Almost 1 in 10 people in the Peterborough area live in poverty and the greatest majority of those living in poverty are women and children.¹ Recently, the Peterborough Examiner reported that the city's unemployment rate is the second highest in Canada at 9.8%.²

Access to affordable housing is another measurement of poverty. In Peterborough, 50.4% of renters spend over the recommended 30% of their income on housing, compared to the Ontario average of 44.6% of renters.³

For these families and individuals, it is much harder to pay for other necessities of life such as nutritious food, clothing, and utilities.

There are individual and community costs to poverty. For example, compared with the wealthiest neighbourhoods, populations in impoverished neighbourhoods in Canada have a 28 per cent higher death rate and double the suicide rate.⁴ Regardless of similar access to treatment and outcomes of care, the rate of heart attacks in the least affluent neighbourhoods was

37 % higher than in the most affluent ones.⁵

Considering that 80% of women who are imprisoned are charged with poverty related offenses, the Elizabeth Fry Society has started working toward providing financial literacy training to clients.

Our Support Counsellor, Debbie Carriere, has received training in the facilitation of a program from the Canadian Centre for Financial Literacy. She is developing a program about financial literacy for low income women that will

best suit the needs of our clients. The topics covered will include:

- Exploring our relationship to money
- Budgeting
- Banking and alternatives
- Credit and saving
- Debt and repayment
- Healthy eating on a limited budget
- Best use of community resources.

This program will be delivered over 8 weeks and will further empower our clients to live full and healthy lives.

1. Root Causes of Poverty Working Group. 2007. *Poverty in Peterborough City and County*. <http://newsite.pcchu.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/10/PH-peterborough-city-county.pdf>.

2. Wedley, B. 2013, February 12. Less than half of Peterborough residents have jobs and that's unsustainable economist tells group forming Worker's Action Centre. *The Peterborough Examiner*.

3. 2011 *Poverty Report Card: Peterborough Poverty Reduction Strategy*. http://www.pprn.ca/news/reportcard_2011.pdf.

4. Lankin, F. & Sheikh, M.A. 2012. *Brighter Prospects: Transforming Social Assistance in Ontario*.

5. Ibid.

ELIZABETH FRY SOCIETY OF PETERBOROUGH

The Elizabeth Fry Society of Peterborough is committed to advocating for and supporting women who are facing the criminal justice system. EFry programs and services are designed to provide women with the tools they need to be empowered; to make healthy choices and to break the cycle of violence and recidivism in their lives.

All programs and services are offered at no cost to the participant.

- 80% of women in prison are there for poverty related offenses
- Women and girls account for 70% of people who live in absolute poverty
- Approximately 51% of Canadian women have been victims of at least one act of physical or sexual violence
- The cost to keep a woman in a provincial institution is \$154 per day
- The cost to supervise and support a woman in the community is \$3.64 per day

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