

We offer housing, supportive counseling and assistance to adults recovering from mental health issues which effect their ability to maintain activities of daily living, employment, housing, self-care and/or meaningful relationships with family and friends.



# The Regenesiis

Building Healthy Communities

respect

diversity

advocacy

Regeneration

Housing and Support Services

## What does home mean to you?

By Jennifer Bober– Case Manager

As I started to collect submissions for this months newsletter a theme started to appear to me. The question of what does home mean to you? You will read in this edition of the Regenesiis different members stories on what home has meant to them and what Regeneration has meant to them.

I asked staff, members, friends and even strangers on the street to describe to me what home meant to them. Safety, comfort, relaxation, peace, community and a place where one can be oneself. These were just some of the

words people used. A few other thoughts that came out were that home is not a place it is a feeling. That home is a place where you can be 100% yourself emotionally and physically.

Here at Regeneration we strive to give our members a place they can be proud to call home and build healthy communities. Our annual events and outings are great opportunities to all come together and share our stories. One of my favorite thoughts someone shared with me about home was that home is a place which evokes a sigh of relief when you walk through the door. I hope everyone reading this feels this way wherever home is to you. We all deserve to feel at home. Happy Summer!

## My Story

By. Tina Hanyes

My name is Tina and I have a story to tell. About 1 ½ years ago I was forced to leave my home by the company I kept. I was heavy into the drug scene and my life was spiralling out of control. I felt lost, lonely and afraid of where my choices were leading me. Once again I was homeless. That's when I was introduced to Regeneration. They helped me get my housing back, get into a treatment centre and get my life back on track. They gave me hope, courage and the strength to face my past and plan my future.

I've been clean for about a year now. It's been a hard road but Regen walked me thru the baby steps and supported me in the big ones. Their support has been a god sent. I now walk on my own two feet but they are there for me even



on my bad days. I know I can pick up the phone and get the help and support I need.

For me Regen saved my life, gave me a home and a sense of value. They've shown me that I'm a person that matters. We all are. So for those who know Regen, I'm sure you can relate. Regen showed this once hopeless case they are now a hopeful case and hope I have.

I'll continue being a good honest person, and never give up. I've since become a peer support worker for St Stephens and am hopeful that I can be

as supportive to others as Regen has been to me. I am grateful for the new friends I have at Regen. Thank you!

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## Update from Noel By Noel Simpson– Executive Director

I studied this poem by Robert Frost many (like really many) years ago and it had a powerful effect on my view of how we are all connected in this world and how we can share with each other in many ways, not just with words. I was thinking about all of us at Regen and how we have grown with so many programs and yet we all share in that essence that is Regen and this poem came to mind. The reference to “men” and not “men and women” dates the poem a bit, but it’s the thought that counts.

### The Tuft of Flowers By Robert Frost

I went to turn the grass once after one  
Who mowed it in the dew before the sun.

The dew was gone that made his blade so keen  
Before I came to view the levelled scene.

I looked for him behind an isle of trees;  
I listened for his whetstone on the breeze.

But he had gone his way, the grass all mown,  
And I must be, as he had been,—alone,

As all must be,' I said within my heart,  
Whether they work together or apart.'

But as I said it, swift there passed me by  
On noiseless wing a 'wildered butterfly,

Seeking with memories grown dim o'er night  
Some resting flower of yesterday's delight.

And once I marked his flight go round and round,  
As where some flower lay withering on the ground.

And then he flew as far as eye could see,  
And then on tremulous wing came back to me.

I thought of questions that have no reply,



## Peer Support at Step Up By Rhonda Skene- Peer Support Worker

Step Up Program has been flourishing over these last few months and a very important part of this, in partnership with the RSW's has been the Peer Support Workers. We, as the Peer Support Workers would like to give you a glance at the diverse approaches to recovery, and how we engage our members and bring a sense of community and togetherness to our program.

Jennifer Rosser, one of our Peer Support Workers says, “I have been working at the Step Up Program for about ten months. During that time I have seen a sense of community develop among the members and staff and I think my role has contributed to that. In addition to meeting with members individually to talk about their lives, I also run group activities. My primary responsibility is to facilitate the community dinner. I promote member self-determination by involving members in the process, from planning to eat, to grocery shopping, to preparing the food.” I have been further developing a sense of community by running a popular guitar sing along. The staff has described it as “magical and “relaxing”. Andrea Rowe is the second Peer Support staff person who also facilitates the community dinner at Step-up, alternating Sundays with Jenny.

Scott McDougal and myself, Rhonda Skene, also Peer Support Workers have as well brought an atmosphere of “Learning and Growing Together” as we co-facilitate a “Pathways to Recovery” group. This group embraces the process of recovery and Scott and myself have observed the members bonding while validating, supporting and having the highest regard for one another. They share their experiences and when they do that it becomes very beneficial and enduring to the group. Another well-liked class is the guided meditation that I facilitate in a group, or one on one. I reflect on the member’s words and body language after the guided meditation and “Being in the moment”, “Relaxed”, “Calm”, and “Peaceful” are some of the sentiments shared afterwards. I, Rhonda, share Jenny’s sentiments in that I recognize the important role that we have and the changes I observe are that the members are engaging more with one another, in the classes they are so supportive and validating to each other, and the laughter and the sense of community just puts a smile on my face.

Scott McDougal also addresses the benefits of Peer. We are to assist the member in their journey of recovery whatever that may be. The main benefit is “equal relationship.” Scott believes the most valuable thing that we have to give is our “lived experience” with addictions/

mental health. We can be a valuable resource to the members because we have been through a similar journey as them. While interacting with the members Scott sees them growing and trying new challenges in life in general and their own recovery.

One of my fondest moments at the Step Up Program is when Sherry Reilly, one of our tenant members, expressed that when she had a dog previously in her life, her life was better and she was happy. Sherry asked me, "can I get a dog?" Sherry's eyes lit up and a smile appeared instantly as she said, "I would love to have a dog to take care of!" All the staff at Step-up agreed that Sherry would be a wonderful dog owner and off to the Humane Society we went to start the process of adoption. Two weeks later Sherry was the new dog owner of three year old "Tiger". Even though Tiger was nervous and shy he now had a new home. His shyness and nervousness quickly changed with all the love and attention that Sherry gave him. Tiger and Sherry were meant to be and both of them are happy and content in each other's company. When I asked Sherry, "how does it feel being a dog owner?" Sherry replied, "I went from depressed to happy...Me and you did this together Rhonda, and now I have Tiger...the delight of my life! I am so thankful.



## Building Community

By Anton Dzyubenko– Case Manager



As you can see in this picture – it is positive. It is Vaughan Road work program, and marvelous Linda is with her beautiful smile in front of the shining walls after a great weekly four-hour clean up. It is work that makes you feel good. No one was sure if it would work; if

someone wanted it; if . . . But it does work, and we are lucky that we have great tenants who seize the opportunity to engage into changing the place they live in. Work program is a four-hour work opportunity for our tenants to keep their Vaughan Road location fresh, clean and welcoming. The program started in early March, and the tenants look forward to their shifts, while the regular building tenants comment on the positive changes to the building. It is noticeable and it is meaningful and rewarding. It also gives a new direction and a desire to add something nice and new to the building to make it more homie, more yours.

Two months into the program, a few tenants volunteered to flower the front lawn of the building. And despite some challenges and hopefully temporary setbacks, they stay on track with their ideas and ready to follow through with the first strip of flowers, maybe, next year a garden – who knows.

Another avenue that the work program is going to take is Regen's furniture revitalization workshop, which is currently in the brainstorming stage with the sender and all the rest of the materials waiting to propel us to new endeavours.

So the work program is not just a work program. It is ideas; it is change; it is teamwork and the strength and opportunities.

Thank you all the Vaughan tenants who participate and who will participate in the Vaughan Road work program for your work and ideas and for the building that there is no other like that.

## Student Placement Experience By Melissa Turner

As my placement at Regen comes to an end I have been reflecting on how much I have learned and accomplished since September. As a student in the Intensive Case Management Program, I have gained a lot of experience along the way. Working with my supervisor, Lisa Orr, I have come to understand the wide range of skills that a case manager must have including collaboration, organization, negotiation and active listening skills. Engaging with members and working with other professionals has enhanced and broadened my understanding of mental illness more than any textbook or psychology course could have ever provided. However, I am also able to do things I would not have expected to be a part of my role; adjust a clock, fix a sandal, identify a bed bug and untangle knots from yarn.



A typical day for me involves meeting with a few members in the morning and returning to the office to write case notes, participate in committee meetings, and attend more meetings with Lisa in the community, all the while debriefing my work with her. During these discussions

I would receive feedback about my work with members, learn how to navigate the complex and fragmented mental health system, and have someone to reflect ideas off of. During placement I have faced challenging scenarios where I am required to think on my feet and be creative in building rapport with members. Since December, I have been working with Rosemary in providing her support and advocacy. When we first met, she briefly mentioned to me that she liked to paint, so in our visits I would often bring art supplies and we would both get creative while we chatted. Whether it's art, knitting or colouring, creativity allowed Rosemary and I to develop a rapport.

Before Ryerson matches students with a placement agency, they are required to attend meetings about the placement program. I remember learning in these meetings that as a student I would need to be prepared to absorb everything the agency and supervisors have to offer. Although I agree with this statement, I think that Ryerson overlooked the education opportunity of working with members like Rosemary. It's the members and the culture at Regen that contributed to my overall learning experience as a placement student.

## The Peer Support Program By Andrea Rowe— Peer Support Worker

The Peer Support Program is continuing to assist the Member Involvement Survey Committee to provide the results of the survey to Regen members. So, if you have not yet seen the results, you can expect the Committee will be meeting with you very soon!

The Peer Support Group is continuing to meet once a month. In May, they had an opportunity to go to High Park to enjoy the Cherry Blossoms in full bloom. Everyone had a wonderful time, and the blossoms did not disappoint!



I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as a recent addition to the Peer Support Team. My name is Andrea Rowe and it is with great excitement that I have begun a new journey as a part-time Peer Sup-

port Worker at Step Up, and most recently, at Anderson House. May I just extend a heart-felt “Thank You” to the members and staff of the Step Up Program for the warm welcome I received, and for the wonderful relationships that I have begun to develop. Step Up members: You inspire me! Your self-determination, your strengths, your passions, your drive to live your lives fully, and your commitment to being a part of a supportive community tell a powerful story about the process of recovery. Thank you; I have already learned so much from each one of you. I really look forward to continuing to get to know each of you, and playing a supportive role as you reach for the stars!

## My Story

### By Joseph Battersby

I was ten years old when I left Scotland and sailed across the Atlantic with my two brothers John and Tommy and my mum. Dad was already in Toronto. I had my 10<sup>th</sup> birthday on the ship. I got myself in trouble that day. That was the beginning of myself getting into trouble. I settled in the east end of Toronto and got married at the age of twenty one. I became a TTC driver and bought a house in the Beaches as well as a sheep dog named Bear. I got involved in selling marijuana for six years and got busted. I got a two year sentence served in Maplehurst. I set up a store in jail selling cigarettes, pop and chips until they busted me. I finally got released from Maplehurst, got divorced, and set up an apartment with my brother John the butcher. We lived in Regent Park. One day, I got pissed off with the landlord and threw him over the verandah from the second floor. He got a concussion and I got an eviction.

So I moved back to the east end, and hung around a



place called “Frank and Helen’s”, and that is where I met Crystal, my blind friend who became like my sister. She is still my closest friend today. I was living at Beech and Queen and there was a fire in my

building. I helped save some people and got a plaque for it. But I ended up with a brain injury from all the smoke and had to go to the hospital. From there I was sent to CAMH, and after spending some time there I ended up in Regeneration housing. I am happy where I live; I get my meals and a nice room, and I can visit my friend in the east end whenever I want. I really want to thank my case managers Paul and Azy for all the help they give me. I also want to thank Linda and Tina at my house for putting up with all my shenanigans.

## My New Puppy

### By. A.B.

My new puppy's name is J.A.R.V.I.S. .He's named after the iron man A I program that tony stark talks to. Jarvis has changed my life for the better. I now have something to do on a daily basis. He entertains me, he is a little comedian. I love him far more than I expected I would. He's spoiled. Why shouldn't I spoil him? He's the most positive thing I have. He keeps me happy.

5 yrs ago I had a raging opioid and crack addiction. That led me to be homeless on the streets. “I been there .. got the tshirt., etc.”. You wouldn't have recognized a 5yr old picture of me. Regeneration has allowed me to afford my own apartment and be stable enough to have my own perfect pet. It's nice to be self sufficient..



## Welcome to Anderson Building. By Linda Hutcheson– Program Supervisor

We didn't get much of a spring but we are sure glad that the nicer weather is finally here. With special thanks to our new partnership with Syme Woolner Neighborhood and Family Centre our award winning rooftop garden is now up and running again this year. With excellent volunteers from Syme Woolner they have planted many fruits and vegetables. This produce will help feed the members of Anderson as well as the community at large. We are all excited to be able to give back to our community.

A few of our members recently went to Windsor Ontario for a silver bass bonanza! Around this time each spring, the silver bass make their way up the Detroit River from Lake Erie to spawn and then head toward Lake St. Clair for the summer. The river is so full of fish in the spring that many anglers on the waterfront can practically fill their coolers by lunchtime. The fish is tasty, clean and nearly boneless; everyone will get a chance to taste them at our Annual Cultural Splash.



I would like to give a shout out to our fabulous members and staff at Anderson who help make Anderson such a great place to live and work. It wouldn't be the same without you all. We are looking forward to getting out more as the weather stays nice and meeting up with other fellow members of Regeneration Community Services at various agency functions. See you around real soon!



## A thank you to Regeneration Community Services By Sandy Sue-Ping

I am extremely thankful to Regeneration Housing and support services and its staff for the great work they do in providing affordable, comfortable and well maintained housing for their clients.

I have been living at McMurray House (one of the properties owned by Regeneration House) for almost 9 years and I am glad that I was accepted into the program. This organization really has its client's welfare at heart, dealing with any maintenance problems in an efficient, prompt way and ensuring that we have communication with staff by providing an after-hours telephone number for emergencies.

They employ some of us to do reception work at the head office and seasonal work around the different properties.

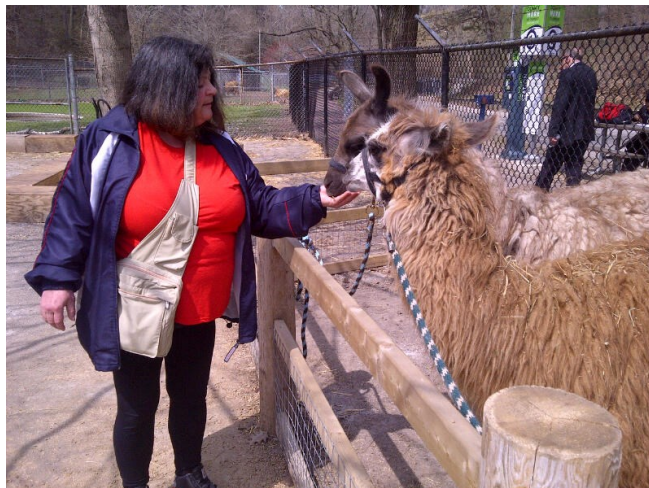
Recreational activities provided by Regeneration House include tickets to the Blue Jays baseball games in the summer, skating at City Hall in the winter, bowling, shows and plays. Also VIA train trips, photography and art classes, camping, visits to the ROM and AGO. Annual events include Cultural Splash, BBQ in High Park and a Christmas Party.

We also mark other yearly events such as New Year's Eve, Valentine's Day, St Patrick's Day, Easter, Canada Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas with parties, decorations and food reflecting the particular occasion.

Lastly Regeneration provides us with gift cards.

A big heartfelt THANK YOU to RHSS!

# What's Happening at Regen



## Struggle

Brighter... Brighter and beyond understanding and even in craziness of this word “transcend” let us grab our souls despising their might into the form of the vicious animals. Oh, let us dip them into such a flying kite where faith and sight are truly-truly One Deep Seizure, where oblivion is Father’s tight compassion and we are His Mansions, His intentions for us to live.

Andrei Bogdanov

Home is where the heart is

Happy Summer Everyone!!

Newsletter Committee  
Jennifer Bober  
Richard Skipper  
Linda Heikkila  
George Barr



2238 Dundas St. West  
Suite 307  
Toronto, Ontario  
M6R 3A9  
Phone: (416) 703 - 9645  
Fax: (416) 703 - 9648  
Web:  
[www.regenerationcs.org](http://www.regenerationcs.org)

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