

E4C ENVOY

AUGUST 2013



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- Send us an email to connect@e4calberta.org
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**On the Cover:
WEAC Resident**



Charitable Registration Number:
13155-8140-RR0001

E4C's mission is to limit, alleviate and ultimately eliminate poverty.

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Message from the Interim CEO

For close to 40 years, E4C has operated the Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC), an emergency shelter for women who have nowhere to live. As one of E4C's longest running programs, WEAC and the thousands of women it has helped over the years have taught us the complex life histories and circumstances faced by homeless women. WEAC has and continues to serve as a spring board for E4C innovation.

Many E4C programs grew from our learnings at WEAC to better help women make the journey out of poverty and homelessness. These innovations include the Crossroads group of programs, providing specialized support to sexually exploited women engaging in prostitution; Our Place, permanent supportive housing for women with ongoing mental illness, and Elizabeth House, short term supportive housing for homeless women.

More recently, our innovation has been informed by Housing First, a service delivery model that put priority on a rapid and direct move from homelessness to housing. WEAC is now connected to two E4C case management teams that help women at the shelter to obtain and retain permanent housing of their choice as quickly as possible. I hope this issue of E4C Envoy will bring to light how WEAC is at the centre of E4C's work supporting homeless women.

I would also like to remind you that the E4C Envoy is now available electronically. To receive the Envoy via email, please share your email address with us, by email (connect@e4calberta.org), phone (780-424-7543), or returning the tear-off slip on the last page of this issue.

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Inside the Walls of WEAC

When women arrive at the E4C Women's Emergency Accommodation Centre (WEAC), a homeless shelter open 24/7, it is their last refuge. They often arrive without any possessions, income or supportive relationships. They could be suffering from an undiagnosed mental illness, recently discharged from the hospital with nowhere else to go, or escaping prostitution.

There were 487 homeless women counted in the 2012 Edmonton Homeless Count. A report on *Intensive Case Management Considerations to Improve Housing Stability Amongst Women* found that the unique needs of homeless women versus homeless men are rooted in women's experiences of trauma as well as the distinctive risks that face this population, such as sexual exploitation and violence.

When women enter WEAC, they are provided with three meals, a bed off the floor, a set of hygiene products and clothes, to meet their most immediate basic needs. Angie Bartholet, Kitchen

Manager, has been crafting these meals for 14 years. She describes, "the philosophy of our kitchen is that we want the women to enjoy their meal. We want them to leave happy, feeling full and satisfied each time." These are meals that include homemade pizza dough and a menu with diversity and thoughtfulness throughout. Bagged lunches are prepared for those heading out to work during the day.

Women experience a sense of community at the shelter. There are barbecues, craft nights, games and make-over events. Students and volunteers lead these activities. Barb McClintock, a Support Worker who has been with WEAC for 8 years, dresses in a different costume every day of October and ensures that the décor of the walls changes with the seasons and holidays.

Once basic needs are addressed, WEAC focuses on assisting women to exit into their own permanent housing. An Outreach Worker and Placement Coordinator work to help the women



In Support of Homeless Women

With WEAC operating at capacity most nights and a turnover of 791 women staying at the shelter in 2012, WEAC cycles through basic necessities very quickly. The wear and tear on the building is also costly, due to this high volume of traffic. Donations of many forms aid in providing a sense of comfort to the women. Here are a few ways to contribute to WEAC:

- In-kind items: pjs, new underwear, socks, blankets, first aid supplies, microwaves, and 4' x 8' sheets of plywood (needed to stabilize beds)
- Volunteers, or groups of volunteers, are needed to help out with basic building maintenance, such as painting, cleaning and heavy lifting
- Financial donations are essential to this program. Enclosed is an envelope or donations can be made online at www.e4calberta.org/donate-to-e4c Please make cheques out to E4C's WEAC.

become healthy both physically and mentally. The team supports women in recovery, works towards ensuring women are on the right medication, connects women with resources and providing income options so they have the best chance of success when they leave WEAC. Program Manager Mandie Dening summarizes, "Simply put, the Outreach Worker and

Placement Coordinator figure out what people need and navigate the systems to see how they can attain it."

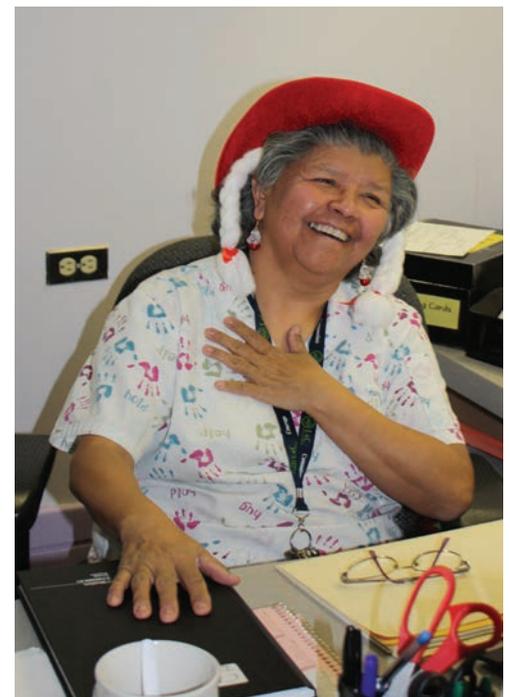
The walls of WEAC provide a temporary refuge of support and dignity. By affirming the humanity of homeless women, E4C aspires to help each woman to rediscover their own hopes and dreams and take steps toward ending their homelessness.

Connect with us about how you can get involved today:

WEAC

9611 101A Avenue, Edmonton
 Phone: 780.423.5302
 Email: mdening@e4calberta.org

WEAC IN NUMBERS



TO THE PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES WHO SUPPORT E4C

THANK YOU

Donor Spotlight: Alta-Fab Structures



Pictured: Shaun and Hannah from Crossroads and Mandie from WEAC

Alta-Fab Structures wanted to be intentional with the money that they were donating; they wanted a program where the donations had the biggest impact. Alta-Fab became aware of Crossroads Outreach, an E4C program that offers support and resources to persons involved in prostitution. In 2011, Alta-Fab purchased a van for Crossroads. The Outreach van provides immediate help to people on the street and involves volunteers to show the women that people in the community care and want to help.

Hank Van Weelden, Vice President of Alta-Fab Structures, started going on ride-alongs and quickly became connected to the staff and

understood the role of the program in the community. Hank describes, “I honestly fell in love with the program. The staff have such a connection to the clients. As soon as the van approaches, a safe bubble is created. When the van door opens, the women come in, sit down and get to be who they are. The staff elicit this safe environment and the women’s reactions to the staff are so genuine.”

The opportunity to connect in these evenings out in the van allows Hannah Cully, Crossroads Outreach Team Leader, the time to share stories about the women and their immediate needs. Hanna describes, “He’s always striving to learn more about the program, the demographics, the social systems, about systematic oppression, so he and Alta-Fab can feel confident in their donations.”

Alta-Fab’s donations to Crossroads this year have helped the program meet 15% of its budget. Most recently, the van has been outfitted with shelving and seating benches, but donations also include the smaller and truly thoughtful items, like a stairwell banister for a resident with reduced mobility or an honorarium for a volunteer. These items give an extra spark to the program, and give meaning and respect to the work that is done by the program staff. Hank states, “they always say thank you to me. I say thank you to them. They’re out there everyday doing the work that we as a society need to do.”

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|---|--|
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