

# JohnHoward

SOCIETY OF TORONTO

PREVENTION ■ INTERVENTION ■ REINTEGRATION

# JHST

# Newsletter

Winter 2017

Issue 1

## Did you know?

Approximately 10% of Canadians have a criminal record. That's nearly 4 million people.

## Welcome to our first quarterly newsletter!

Sonya Spencer, Executive Director

Let me begin by thanking you for taking the time to read our JHST newsletter which we hope you will enjoy on a quarterly basis going forward. We are an organization committed to community safety, healthy neighborhoods and building the capacity of those we serve.

It has been 18 months since John Howard Society of Toronto (JHST) and St. Leonard's Society of Toronto amalgamated, so it is time now to share our stories.

On average, 8,500 clients walk through the doors of JHST each year. We have nearly 100 staff and over 50

community volunteers who work hard to provide evidence-informed services from Scarborough through to Etobicoke.

Although we may not be able to help every individual, our overall success in my opinion gives us bragging rights.

In this first issue, you will read about our Partner Assault Response Program, Record Suspension Service, post-incarceration barriers, and some recent student experiences. We will

continue to highlight programs, report on exciting partnerships/collaborations, feature client stories, and use

our newsletter as a tool to bring attention to current issues facing our sector. As always JHST would welcome your feedback, input and perhaps even contributions as we build this newsletter into another agency success supporting our mission.

Yours truly,  
Sonya Spencer,  
Executive Director



Sonya Spencer,  
Executive Director

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## JHST Goes to Africa!

Lois Powers, Assistant Executive Director

John Howard Society of Toronto has been delivering gender violence counselling for 40 years. For the last 20 years, we have had a contract with the Ministry of the Attorney General to deliver a Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program in Toronto along with nine other service providers. We are recognized

for working with men who present with complex needs that frequently require a holistic approach. We use a restorative justice framework where men are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, learn new relationship skills, and work through shame, receiving a high level of support and all

while we deliver safety planning for their partners.

As a result of our reputation and expertise, we have been invited by Crossroads International to provide  
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United Way  
Member Agency

# JHST Goes to Africa!

(continued from page 1)

training to social workers, teachers, Chiefs, lawyers and judges in Africa for the past three years. This year, we are pleased to have the opportunity again to send two staff – Jaime Tilston from our Crossroads Day Reporting Centre and Rhea Harry from our PAR Court Intake team – to Ghana, Africa from March 3rd to March 17th, 2017 to carry on with what seems to be a JHST tradition.

What is most valued is the cross-training. We teach our participants about gender violence solutions, and in turn, learn about the richness of our participants' respective cultures. We at JHST are really proud of our international level of service delivery!

With pride,  
Lois Powers,  
Assistant Executive Director

“ No one is immune from jail. People come out; everything is gone, job lost, home gone, property thrown out on the street. ”

Barry Corbett  
Peer Support Worker at the RC

and for as long as the client might need it.

Although this is not always an easy task, RC staff are committed. Barry Corbett – a peer worker at the RC – told me that it can be “a roll of the dice for a bed tonight”. He described a recent experience with a client, where he spent 7-8 hours looking for space in the city.

Fortunately, Barry can usually help his clients in much less time than that.

Treatment for mental health issues can help people succeed in the community as well. RC staff try to identify whether clients might want help with a mental health issue. Where mental health might be an issue, RC staff refer clients to doctor.

Addiction can affect people similarly. Barry cautions clients that for people who have spent time in jail, tolerance for a drug may have decreased, and that can increase the client's risk of an overdose. RC staff refer people with this problem to counsellors and treatment programs.

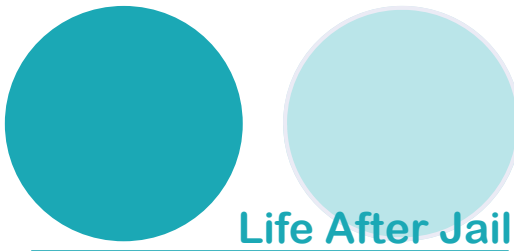
In the interim, RC staff try to identify the factors that led the client to take drugs in the first place. If it was the client's circle of friends, then staff encourage the client to take this opportunity to start anew. If the client attempted to cover-up symptoms of mental health problems with a drug, staff refer the client to a doctor to address the mental health issue in a safer way.

Clients might express interest in longer-term goals as well. The RC helps clients connect with schools, employability training, and business start-up training as well. Some of Barry's past clients have gone on to work in construction, work as painters, and pursued further education.

Food, bus tickets, and offers of accompaniment help all of this work. The Daily Bread Food Bank supplies the RC with food and bottled water. The RC offers clients city-bus fares, and when there's money, fares for regional buses as well. Staff like Barry offer to accompany clients who might want an advocate to help them achieve their day's goals.

It can be difficult for RC staff to follow up with clients after setting them up for success in the community. Clients don't always have permanent addresses, and few have working phones when they leave the South. This makes it all the more rewarding for Barry when he gets a call from a client, whether it's for a little extra support or to tell Barry that things are going well.

Muhammed Adel Afzal, Editor  
Barry Corbett, Peer Support Worker



M. Adel Afzal  
Barry Corbett

JHST operates a [Reintegration Centre](#) (the RC) across the street from the Toronto South Detention Centre (the South). The RC helps people who are released from the South connect with support in the community. The RC works with clients as individuals, defines success collaboratively, and offers clients resources that can help them succeed in society.

It's the first program of its kind in North America.

Housing is foundational to success in the community. A reliable, safe, comfortable place to rest sets clients up to accomplish other goals. For clients who don't have a place to stay upon release, the RC works hard to place the client for the first night



Top: Whitney Wilson and Dianne D'Ellia in Togo, March 2015  
Bottom: Sophia Cousins-Williams in Ghana, November 2015

## Student Placement Experiences

### Above and Beyond

Alanna Beitner

When deciding where I wanted to do my placement this year I knew from the start that I wanted it to be at the John Howard Society of Toronto. I had never worked with men involved in the criminal justice system before and I knew it was something I wanted to learn more about and gain experience in.

My placement experience has been above and beyond what I expected. I had the opportunity to conduct intakes and facilitate my own group which was an incredible experience. I had an amazing mentor and teacher as a supervisor who supported me throughout this placement and I have learned so much. I highly recommend this placement to future students as it is an incredible organization

that is client centered and advocates for their clients.

Alanna Beitner, B.S.W.  
Fourth-year Ryerson University Student in 2016  
Placement: Pre-Employment

outside of my comfort zone to engage in practices that were previously unfamiliar territory. This was a significant learning experience as it challenged me to push my limits to further develop particular skills that I had difficulty conquering.

As a fourth year student, it was important for me to engage in social networking and the staff of JHST really helped me by providing all their knowledge and resources available. JHST provided an environment that consistently supported student learning and growth.

Julianna YooJung Lee, B.S.W.  
Fourth-year Ryerson University Student in 2016 and current Diversion Program Counselor  
Placement: Record Suspensions

### A New Frontier

Julianna YooJung Lee

Last year, I completed my fourth-year placement at John Howard Society of Toronto's Record Suspension department. My time at JHST has been such an enriching experience. I have gained practical knowledge and skills that I will be able to transfer after the completion of my placement. I really appreciated the support of the JHST staff. Due to the support I've received from the staff, I was able to push myself



**Our charitable registration number is 133412114 RR0001.**

### Record Suspensions

Angeline Wong,  
Program Manager

A record suspension, formerly known as a pardon, is an important privilege in Canada. It allows applicants an opportunity to start fresh without the stigma that a criminal record carries. A record suspension seals a person's criminal record so that it does not appear on police checks.

The current eligibility criteria can make a record suspension inaccessible to the often vulnerable members of society who need it.

Since March 2012, part of the criteria includes a 5 year wait period for summary convictions and 10 years for indictable convictions, as well as a \$631 government application fee. Applicants also need to pay additional fees to collect the information necessary to complete their application.

In early 2016, the federal government announced their intention to re-evaluate this criteria. A criminal record can exacerbate a person's difficulty in finding work, and the high application fee can make the situation seem inescapable.

In the late fall of 2016, Public Safety Canada invited us to participate in a public consultation in this re-evaluation. We advocated for reduced wait periods to the pre-2012 rules: a 3 year wait period for summary convictions and a 5 year wait period for indictable convictions. We also asked that the government reduce its application fee back to \$150.

We are optimistic that Public Safety Canada will change the eligibility criteria to one that is more fair and balanced.

In the meantime, we continue to offer our Record Suspension Application Service at one of the lowest rates in Toronto at \$325.

Please remember that there are still some companies who take advantage of peoples' need for application assistance, and have arguably developed unethical business models to create a profit. This includes claims of an "expedited" or "guaranteed" record suspension. The Parole Board of Canada has issued [fraud alerts](#) against some of these claims.

At JHST, we believe in a fair application process for all applicants and do not discriminate against the nature and number of convictions. We provide an honest and transparent service. This means that our clients are informed of each step of the application process and are advised of all costs at the beginning.

We know first hand what it's like to have a criminal record, and we support our clients' goal of achieving new beginnings.

Respectfully,  
Angeline Wong, Program Manager



**Making our community safer by supporting the rehabilitation and reintegration of those who have been in conflict with the law.**

Main Office	Scarborough	South Etobicoke Reintegration Centre	
<b>1669 Eglinton Avenue West</b> <b>416-925-4386</b>	<b>1911 Kennedy Rd., unit #105</b> <b>647-849-1541</b>	<b>215 Horner Avenue</b> <b>647-429-7808</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relapse Prevention and Substance Use Program</li> <li>• Access to safe injection and harm reduction kits</li> <li>• Record Suspension (Pardon) Application Service</li> <li>• Anger Management Program</li> <li>• Mailbag Program for inmates</li> <li>• Drug Transitional Housing Service</li> <li>• Domestic Violence Community Response Program</li> <li>• Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program</li> <li>• Domestic Violence Court Referral Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Record Suspension (Pardon) Application Service</li> <li>• Post-Incarceration Housing Service</li> <li>• Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program</li> <li>• Scarborough Addiction Services Partnership</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Institutional Services (in-reach to Toronto jails)</li> <li>• Peer support</li> <li>• Access to safe injection and harm reduction kits</li> <li>• Connection to mental health and substance use services</li> <li>• TTC Assistance</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Programs for Ontario Works recipients:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finding Employment with a Criminal Record</li> <li>• Strategies Towards Employment and Assertiveness Management</li> <li>• Men in Transition</li> </ul>	<b>East York Locations</b>		
	<b>924 Danforth Avenue</b> <b>416-925-4387</b>	<b>779 Danforth Avenue</b> <b>416-462-3684 / 647-348-2361</b>	<b>419 Jones Avenue</b> <b>416-469-8312</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Post-Incarceration Housing Service</li> <li>• Record Suspension (Pardon) Application Service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crossroads Day Reporting Centre—416-462-3684</li> <li>• KLINK™ Coffee Social Enterprise—647-348-2361 (<a href="http://www.drinkklink.com">www.drinkklink.com</a>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crossroads Residential Program</li> </ul>



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**DIRECTORY**

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