

**john howard society**

## London & District



# ANNUAL REPORT

2021 / 2022

**United Way**  
Perth-Huron

**United Way**  
Elgin Middlesex



London & District

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## HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY

Recognizing the intrinsic worth and dignity of every human being, the John Howard Society is committed to upholding the principles set out in the Human Rights Code of Ontario and Canada. This commitment is expressed in the following undertaking:

The Society shall provide services within its mandate to every person without discrimination regardless of race, ethnicity, language, religion, marital status, gender, sexual orientation, age, abilities, economic status, political affiliation, national ancestry or criminal record.

The Society shall maintain such personnel policies and practices as are consistent with the tenets of the Human Rights Codes of Ontario and Canada.

The Society, through its employees, shall deal with representatives of the community in a responsive manner with courtesy, respect and without prejudice or discrimination.

## OUR CORE VALUES

- We believe that every individual has intrinsic worth and has the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
- We believe in the potential of all human beings and in their capacity for growth and change.
- We believe that all individuals have the right to live in a safe and peaceful society and that justice is best served through measures that resolve conflict and promote the reparation of harm.
- We believe that individuals are responsible for their own actions and must be held accountable for those actions.
- We believe that the root causes of crime are found within communities and that the solutions to crime are also found in communities.
- We believe in serving community needs by cooperating and collaborating to achieve a healthy and safe society.



## MISSION STATEMENT

*Effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes*

### MANDATE

In furtherance of its Mission, the Society:

- Provides for the effective integration into the community of those in conflict with the law and provides, or encourages others to provide, services to those in contact with, or affected by, the criminal justice system
- Promotes changes in the law and the administration of justice which will lead to the more humane and effective treatment of individuals
- Promotes citizen awareness of the problems of crime and its causes, acceptance of responsibility to respond to these problems and involvement in the delivery and management of justice related programs
- Promotes the fair and humane treatment of all incarcerated persons and seeks to ensure that all forms of detention and imprisonment comply with relevant legal and human rights standards

### Description

The John Howard Society of London and District is an organization of citizens who accept responsibility for understanding and dealing with the problems of crime and the criminal justice system.

### Inclusivity/Diversity

The John Howard Society of London and District recognizes the barriers which prevent some members of the community from participating fully in society and affirms its commitment to policies, practices and the provision of services without prejudice or discrimination, as stated in the Human Rights Policy of the John Howard Society of Ontario.



## Message from the President of the Board of Directors and the Executive Director

This year, the John Howard Society of London and District is celebrating its 75th anniversary. What a milestone! 75 years of serving the community and providing "*Effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes*" is definitely a reason for celebration. The heart of our 75th anniversary is our community. The impact we have made, and will continue to make, is a reflection of the strength of our organization and our dedication to making a positive change in the life of every person who accesses our services.

This milestone year has given us an opportunity to celebrate our achievements, reflect on the past and contemplate the future. Since the establishment of the John Howard Society of London and District in 1947, we have passionately served

individuals who need to find a pathway to success. While the John Howard Society has changed greatly over the past 75 years, our mission to support our community members during times of vulnerability has remained steadfast. On behalf of the Board of Directors and the entire staff team, we thank you for your continuous support throughout the Society's history.

We are proud of the history that brought us to this point, and we have been honouring that history throughout the year. We marked the beginning of this special anniversary year by organizing a Board Retreat event, where board members gathered for a full day to learn about the Society's history and participate in Board governance training. We also planned a number of other events this year. In June, we held a Staff Appreciation Day at the backyard of our office building on 570 Queens Avenue. It was a wonderful gathering as the staff enjoyed lunch together and spent time engaging in team building activities. We also held our Summer Reception in June, where our Board of Directors, staff, volunteers, community partners and those who have played a role in our history gathered once again in our backyard to celebrate the 75th anniversary. Everyone enjoyed the food and a piece of our anniversary cake!

As the COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted social gatherings, it was important to find a creative way to engage our clients in celebrating this milestone with us. The Society created client gift bags filled with essential items such as snacks, bus tickets, hygiene products and a hot meal voucher. These were greatly appreciated by the clients who received them.

Our former leader, Ms. Lori Cunningham, has contributed to our 75th anniversary celebration by writing a beautiful History Piece (*Our Story So Far*). Lori highlighted how the Society was founded, the early work of the agency, the client group, development of programs and services and the successes and challenges throughout the history. We also decided to re-publish a number of articles from our 60th anniversary publication. These articles captured historical moments, leaders in our history, profiled our work, demonstrated the role of social work in services to clients and explored social justice issues. We encourage you to read Lori's history piece and the historical statements, included in this year's annual report, to learn more about the Society's remarkable achievements over the years.



As we have taken time to reflect on the Society's history this year, we have a greater appreciation for the importance of remembering our past. Therefore, we wanted to help establish a tangible and lasting reminder of our organization's history by creating a video profiling the Society's journey over the past 75 years. The video will be shared at our Annual General Meeting and posted on our website. We would like to thank everyone who participated in the development and production of this video.

In 1947, the Society's work was delivered by volunteers who provided services to individuals being released from prison. The volunteers assisted with helping men find a place to live and a job. The initial efforts focused on helping clients with basic needs after their release from custody. Over the years, the Society developed a range of services, including institutional services, integration services for men and women leaving prison, individual, family and group counselling, community education, the Women's Group for women with a loved one involved in the

criminal justice system, parole supervision, and Indigenous services. In the nineties, the Society began serving high-risk youth and thanks to funding from the United Way, the Society offered services in secondary schools and in the Boullee and Huron housing projects. We also expanded service delivery into Middlesex County.

The government of Ontario recognized the good work we were doing, and we were invited to apply for the Bail Verification and Supervision Program and the Direct Accountability Program. The United Way Perth-Huron invited us to apply for funding to expand our institutional services program to the Stratford Jail.

We have expanded our catchment area to include new jurisdictions. With the expansion of the Bail program in 2017, the Society now serves Goderich, Stratford, Woodstock, St. Thomas, Walkerton and Owen Sound. We broadened our services to include housing and employment services. New programs have been added along the way, such as the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP) and the Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program in Huron County. The Society is well known for providing effective and professional services in our community. Last year, and in partnership with the John Howard Society of Ontario, we established a new employment program, EMPower, to assist racialized individuals with a criminal record to find employment. This year, the Society was invited by the Ministry of the Attorney General to expand its PAR Program to Perth County. Our work continues to be recognized in the community.

We value these partnerships and appreciate their contribution to the work of the John Howard Society. This year, we would like to acknowledge and express our sincere gratitude to the three Indigenous neighbouring communities, including Chiefs and Councils, for their ongoing support of the John Howard Society and our Indigenous Services Program.

The John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO) has always been a strong supporter of the London office. This year, we bid farewell to Paula Osmok, former Chief Executive Officer of the JHSO, who retired in June 2022. We would like to express our appreciation to Paula for her strong leadership, vision, and dedication to the John Howard Society. We wish Paula a happy retirement. She will be missed by many! We also welcomed Christin Cullen as the new CEO of the JHSO. She has brought new energy, enthusiasm and ideas to the organization. We are honoured to have Christin speak at our AGM.



When talking about the history of the John Howard Society, we have to reflect on the strong leaderships that guided the agency over the years. The Society has been fortunate to have leaders like the late Tom Dykstra and Lori Cunningham who played a vital role in the success of the Society. They both dedicated their careers to the cause of the Society. Lori joined our volunteer crew after her retirement in 2014 and continues to support the Society in so many ways. We owe Tom and Lori a debt of gratitude for their exceptional leadership and service to the Society.

The John Howard Society was established by a group of concerned citizens who volunteered their time to assist clients. The Society's roots in volunteerism remain to this day. The work of the Society is enhanced by the tremendous contributions of time and talent offered by our volunteers over the years. We would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to all of our volunteers. This year, Tia Elkhayri, is the recipient of the Carol Reid Volunteer of the Year Award. Congratulations Tia!

Our staff team has grown over the years. We currently have 32 staff members. The dedication demonstrated by the Society's staff is inspiring. Our staff are committed to the work and Mission of the Society and have persevered through the pandemic with a focus on providing excellent service to our clients. They give tirelessly and selflessly and go above and beyond to support their clients. The work is never easy and the demand for service has increased in recent years. We thank you all for your resiliency and efforts.

The Board of Directors has led this agency for 75 years. Many of the directors have served loyally for many years and their contributions are immense. The directors have provided the necessary support and guidance so that the organization can continue to expand and improve. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Board of Directors for their dedication and exemplary leadership to the John Howard Society.

The John Howard Society faced a number of challenges over the years with changes in funding

sources and politics accompanied by a global pandemic; however, it remained true to its Mission. Today, our community faces the devastating consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic, coupled with an ongoing homelessness and opioid crisis. We are seeing more individuals struggling to find a safe and secure place to live, more families unable to put food on the table, and mental health concerns rising across all demographics of our community. The John Howard Society continues to be a safe place that welcomes clients who carry the heavy weight of their struggles when they land on our doorstep.

Over the years, there have been ups and downs. There have been exciting times and challenging times. These certainly played a significant role in the John Howard Society becoming the type of organization that it is today. In recent years, our agency has experienced tremendous growth and has much to be grateful for. We will continue to move forward while looking back on the impact, the milestones, and the achievements of an outstanding journey for 75 years.

The John Howard Society has grown. Last year, we served over 3,000 clients. We have expanded our services; we have two offices, and we are bursting at the seams. We are renovating our office building on 570 Queens Avenue to create more office and parking spaces. We continued through the pandemic, survived cuts in funding and we are still working on new program ideas to meet the needs of our clients.

We have accomplished a lot over the years, and we still have a great deal of work to do. The John Howard Society has been there for our community for the past 75 years and with your support we promise to continue to do this work for decades to come. We welcome everyone to join the celebration of our 75th anniversary in one form or another. Thank you for your ongoing support of the John Howard Society and our community.



President



Executive Director



## Board of Directors



2021 / 2022

### OFFICERS

Mr. Stuart Ewing, President  
Mr. Jeff Gray, 1st Vice President  
Ms. Sandy Ferreira, 2nd Vice President  
Mr. Brian Greene, Treasurer (until July 2, 2021)  
Mr. David Peeling, Treasurer

### DIRECTORS

Deputy Chief Patricia McIntyre  
Mr. Christopher Dobson  
Mrs. Christina Ninham  
Professor Peter Barton  
Mrs. Judy Webb (until August 15, 2021)  
Mr. Michael Cywink  
Dr. Jared Berman  
Ms. Mary Kay Arundel  
Mrs. Lynn Humfress-Trute  
Ms. Roberta Gibson  
Mr. Abdulrahman Saad

### HONOURARY DIRECTOR

Mr. George Brunton  
Mrs. Margaret MacGee  
Mrs. Sheila Davenport  
Mrs. Judy Webb



## Honourary Director

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Judy Webb

Judy Webb retired from the Board of Directors in August 2021 after more than 21 years of service. She served on the Executive Committee of the Board, including two terms as President. Throughout her tenure, she did her best to attend meetings with the United Way and funding recognition events. She was a member of key committees within the organization, including the Succession Planning Committee, the interview committee for the executive director position and the policy committee. She also represented John Howard Society of London and District on the John Howard Society of Ontario Board of Directors.

Judy initially became connected to the Society during the nineties when she was the principal of Sir George Ross Secondary School. Judy and the Society worked closely in the provision of counselling at Ross with students who were at risk of expulsion because of non-compliant and aggressive behaviours with their peers and teachers. The Society collaborated with Judy to expand on this idea, and invited many other agencies to offer services on site at Ross, including probation, St. Leonard's Community Services, Merrymount Family Support and Crisis Centre, LUSO Community Services and others. A group of agency leaders met regularly with Judy at the helm to discuss gaps in services to the students and brainstorm solutions.

The Society's strong relationship with Judy led to an invitation to join the Board of Directors. Her contribution was significant. She rarely missed a meeting and she was a good listener. When Judy offered her opinion, it was respected and she had a particular skill of summarizing the directors' views and recommending a course of action. When the Board faced difficult and important decisions, Judy had a gentle, pragmatic and sound approach.

Her experience with young people was invaluable to the Society in the development of other services for high-risk youth. We are missing Judy, but her legacy to the John Howard Society will continue to guide the agency in the years to come. Judy was named an Honourary Director on February 16, 2022.

## Staff 2021 / 2022

Taghrid Hussain, Executive Director  
Kelly Reiter, Manager of Finance and Administration

Kathleen Lowe, Social Worker/Clinical Supervisor  
Juli McGrenere, Manager/Social Worker  
Tracey Gough, Social Worker/Institutional Worker

Courtney Coqu, Institutional Worker/Counsellor  
Laura Earle, Group Facilitator/Counsellor

Brian Webster, Social Worker/Direct Accountability Program Coordinator

Julia Lansens, Social Worker

Samantha Fernandes, Social Worker

Zainab Bakare, Social Worker

Anita Parker, Indigenous Services Program Supervisor

Carolyn Henry, Indigenous Services Worker

Charlene Beatty, Indigenous Services Worker

Crystal George, Indigenous Services Worker

Avelea Post, Housing Stability Worker

Caitlin Campbell, Housing Stability Worker

Mary Gregg, Partner Assault Response Program Facilitator

Greg Bowman, Partner Assault Response Program Facilitator

Elizabeth McArthur, Support Worker

Jenna Willman, Support Worker

Lara Hicks, Support Worker

Brett Landsborough, Employment Specialist

Ana Rojas, Director of Programming and Marketing

Ricardo Suarez-Leon, Bail Supervisor

Stephanie Alegria, Bail Supervisor/Volunteer Program Coordinator

Ashley Chief, Indigenous Bail Worker

Kristen Longdo, Indigenous Bail Worker

Sarah Dias, Bail Worker

Mathew Dewit, Bail Worker

Meagan Oldroyd, Bail Worker

Jacob Dias, Bail Worker

Jovana Lojpur, Bail Worker-WASH Court

Sara Brown, Bail Worker-Stratford

McKinley Pickett, Bail Worker-

Goderich/Walkerton

Faben Wossenew, Bail Worker-Woodstock

Katelyn Brush, Bail Worker- Woodstock

Sally Lai, Bail Worker- St. Thomas

Tia Elkhayri, Bail Worker- St. Thomas

Rachel Robb, Canada Summer Jobs/Support Staff

## Students

Chloe Densham – BSW Practicum - King's University College

Britany Avery – MSW Practicum - King's University College

Olive Li – MSW Practicum - King's University College

# VOLUNTEERS

19 VOLUNTEERS  
949 HOURS CONTRIBUTION



## VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

The aim of the program is to build leadership and organizational capacity and to develop the next generation of volunteers. Members of the community are recruited, trained and supervised in the provision of agency services. Volunteers expand the capacity to deliver effective services to the community.

CAMERON WELLS  
TIA ELKHAYRI  
ELIZABETH LEWIS  
SALLY LAI  
EMILY WOODWARD  
TIBA FEIZ-BARAZANDH  
JOURI HUSSAIN  
JENNA VELJI  
RACHEL ROBB  
ARYANNA PSOFIMIS  
SYDNEY PICKLE  
AUTUMN HANNA  
MATTHEW MCGUIGAN  
SYDNI O'ROUKE  
ANNA BILDA  
SAIGE KIRKPATRICK  
JOE OLIJ  
SARAH ABU AL-SAOUD  
LORI CUNNINGHAM

## CAROL REID VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2021

The Carol Reid Award was established in 2001 in honour of Carol Reid who was a long-term staff member of the John Howard Society of London and District. Carol was a woman of courage and determination. Despite a visual impairment, she carried a large caseload of clients, conducted interviews at Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, developed community education programs for elementary school children, supervised students and performed the role of volunteer coordinator. Her standards were high and she demanded the best from her volunteers and students. Following her untimely death, this annual award was established to recognize the volunteer who has made an exceptional contribution to the agency that year.



Tia Elkhayri began her volunteer experience at the John Howard Society in August 2021. Tia completed a Bachelor of Arts with an honours specialization in criminology and a minor in social justice and peace. Tia volunteered with the Bail Verification and Supervision Program assisting the front office. Tia quickly learned the challenges clients would face and would treat each one of them with kindness, compassion, and empathy. Her eagerness to learn and make a difference in the community was always demonstrated by embodying our Mission *“Effective, just, and humane responses to crime and its causes.”*

Tia is a passionate and committed volunteer and has made an exceptional contribution to the John Howard Society. She is well received by staff, volunteers and clients and always brings her perspective and knowledge when working with clients. Since commencing her work with the Society, Tia has contributed over 200 hours of volunteer service. Tia was hired at the end of November 2021 as the St. Thomas Bail Worker.

Tia is most definitely worthy of the Carol Reid Volunteer of the Year Award. Thank you for all the hard work and your dedicated contribution to the Society.

Congratulations Tia!





## MY VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

My beliefs in human rights and justice were driving forces that guided me to pursue a degree in Criminology and Social Justice and Peace Studies. The two subjects were very much one and the same to me because one cannot understand the criminal justice system (CJS) without having an understanding of the systemic injustices and inequalities that are deeply rooted in our society. As a result, I wanted to use the knowledge gained from my studies to make an impact on the communities most affected by these injustices.

The John Howard Society's Mission statement, *"Effective, just, and humane responses to crime and its causes"* truly resonated with my outlook on how individuals in conflict with the law should be treated. The values that the organization holds greatly align with my own. This is what led to my involvement as a volunteer with the John Howard Society, and in particular, the Bail Verification and Supervision Program.

In addition to the theory learned in my studies, the John Howard Society has enabled me to work with vulnerable clients in a direct, hands-on approach. This degree of involvement with bail clients resulted in a nuanced understanding of the CJS, which has allowed for a more holistic approach to not only who is being impacted, but it has also enlightened me to their lived experiences, allowing me to continuously reflect on how I view, understand, and grow in this sector.

The vulnerability of the clientele that the John Howard Society serves runs deeper than their conflict with the law. These are individuals who struggle with homelessness, mental health, substance abuse, and lack of access to basic needs and emotional support. The bail workers, with resources, do everything to ensure that their clients' needs are met. Being in a work environment that fosters empathy, compassion, and respect for clients reaffirmed the similarities between my own values and those held by the organization, as well as my sense of belonging at the John Howard Society.



### Tia Elkhayri

My experience as a volunteer has been enriching. The John Howard Society has strengthened my passion for justice and human rights. I had the opportunity to transition from being a volunteer to a bail supervisor and court worker for St. Thomas. As I work with my own clientele, I am able to use my gained knowledge to recognize the large gaps in our system allowing me to have a more significant impact on those affected by the CJS.

# OUR STORY SO FAR

In 1927, Brigadier General Draper, the Toronto Chief of Police, established a citizens' organization to assist men released from the Guelph Reformatory to integrate into society. Eventually, the organization was named the John Howard Society. The second branch was established in London in 1947, under the leadership of Father Cooke, a Roman Catholic priest. The Society operated out of an office in the basement of the old YMCA building on Wellington Street, on the west side, in between Queens Avenue and Dundas Street. Up until about 2000, two of the founders attended special events.

The Society has deep roots in volunteerism. In the early days, members of the Board of Directors provided services to clients, including vouchers for meals at a restaurant on Dundas Street, help to find a place to live and connections to secure a job. They delivered decks of cards to the jail to relieve boredom in custody. Volunteers continue to play an active role in the organization as directors, assisting with administration and providing services to clients.

1953 was an important year, when the United Community Chest, now known as the United Way, funded the John Howard Society. This development secured the organization's future. Over the years, the United Way became the Society's major funder. While the Society benefitted immensely from United Way funding, the membership in the United Way family of agencies also offered much needed community support, credibility and opportunities. The executive director and staff were busy during the annual campaign with speaking engagements, assisting with special events and attendance at rallies where weekly reports of campaign success were announced to the community with fanfare. Helen Connell, former Executive Director of the United Way, wrote, "our funding partnership has been a friendship as well."

The first professional worker, Don Harris, was hired in role of Executive Director in 1953. The Board of Directors then turned its attention to the social, human rights and criminal justice issues of the day. The death penalty discussion was intense, but laid the foundation for discussions and debate regarding other issues. Directors saw their responsibility extend beyond the operation of a social agency; they had a profound belief in the need for reform to the criminal justice system. A look at the agency's archives illuminates the directors' discussions as they debated the philosophy and core values of the John Howard Society.

## OUR HISTORY

Tom Dykstra was hired in 1969. Tom was a humanitarian and a charismatic leader, respected both within the John Howard Society and the community. Tom attracted a corps of dynamic intellectuals who became directors and supporters of the John Howard Society. As the Society was expanding to other locations in Ontario, executive directors and board members attended meetings at Lake Couchiching and the lively and spirited philosophical discussions were conducted in the midst of a great deal of cigarette smoke. Representatives from London were well known within the organization provincially and nationally; they were formidable, principled and the architects of the Society's core values. Tom was passionate about involving members of the community in the work, including board members, volunteers, students, his friends and his neighbours. Tom's front porch was legendary as a place to visit, drink wine, and debate issues with Tom, his wife Corina, and whoever else happened to be visiting that day.

Tom assembled a skilled social work team and set high standards for the profession. His door was open to all, including clients, and one did not enter the office for the answer; he would ask penetrating and sometimes difficult questions, which would lead to the discovery of the right answer. He was well known for his attention to grammar, scrutinizing every document leaving the agency. He offered clients a warm welcome and clients respected him, rarely misbehaving when he was in the office. He had a profound belief and confidence in the capacity for change; he believed in second chances.

The principles of the Society were eloquently expressed and the staff team was informed and involved in addressing the issues of the day. Tom was kind, intense and he had a great sense of humour. He did not compromise when it came to a principle. No one ever wanted to disappoint him.

The John Howard Society developed a national position on capital punishment and locally, the directors advocated for the closure of the old Middlesex County Jail adjacent to the courthouse and the construction of a new detention centre, known as the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre. In later years, Tom Dykstra became aware of assaults on youth held in the courthouse cells and the John Howard Society was supported by a coalition of organizations and worked for 10 years to address this issue.



## OUR HISTORY

The Board of Directors was strong. Under the leadership of Joseph Beechie and Jack Moran, the Society sought representation on the Board from education, business, law, labour, social work, accounting, clergy and medicine. Additionally, the Society has always had a senior member of the London Police Force and a faculty member from King's School of Social Work as directors. It was a congenial board, which capably directed the Society. Professor Peter Barton assumed the responsibility for nominating the board candidates and has followed in the great tradition of seeking the brightest minds to guide the organization. I have always appreciated that the directors could serve on any board, but they have chosen the John Howard Society. They are unique in their commitment to the work of the Society over decades facilitating continuity and the transmission of intellectual resources to new members. Many directors have also served as representatives to the John Howard Society of Ontario and the national organization, which was established in 1962. Long serving directors such as Judy Webb and George Brunton are awarded the title, "Honourary Director" upon retirement from the Board.

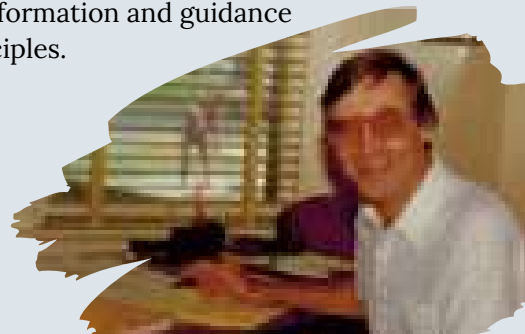
Annually, the Board of Directors toured prisons both in Canada and the United States, developing expertise. The delegations also respectfully requested meetings with other stakeholders such as the Chair of the Ontario Board of Parole. The tours ended during a period of unrest in the institutions when wardens were reluctant to agree to tours. John Howard Society board members were regarded as experts in the field. Margaret MacGee, who was a John Howard Society director for many years, was

appointed to the Task Force, which made recommendations about construction of regional institutions and a healing lodge for Indigenous women.

Until the nineties, the John Howard Society in London remained a small organization. Any person who had the courage to walk through the door of the John Howard Society and ask for help, received service usually the same day; this has not changed over the years. In the seventies, the Society provided counselling to help ex-offenders reintegrate, conducted institutional services at the Middlesex County Jail, and supervised federal parolees under contract. (Federal parole was previously known as "ticket of leave.")

The Women's Group was established in 1971 to assist women who had a loved one incarcerated in prison. This group provides a non-judgmental environment to share resources, coping skills and to reduce the isolation many of the women experience.

When the Ontario government decided to offer provincial parole, it looked to the expertise of the Society; London and other branches of the John Howard Society supervised provincial parolees for about four years. In the eighties, this contract was withdrawn and the Society was offered services with a specialization in serving Indigenous people. From these early beginnings, the Society has developed an Indigenous team responsible for offering services using traditional approaches. This team has garnered deep respect within the John Howard Society and the community, particularly the Court, which relies on the Indigenous team for information and guidance regarding Gladue principles.





## OUR HISTORY

The Society had an active community education program with invitations to speak to grade 12 law classes. Carol Reid developed programs entitled, “Making positive choices” and “Don’t be a bully” long before bullying became well known as a problem. Her presentations were in high demand. Previously a teacher, Carol Reid was a hardworking social worker excelling in a second career. She developed solid therapeutic relationships with clients and offered students and volunteers rigorous training. Following Carol’s untimely death, the Volunteer of the Year Award was named in her honour.

Tom Dykstra died in December 1994. I had accepted the role of Executive Director in April 1994, when Tom received a terminal diagnosis. We were a small team but we turned our minds to preserving and building on Tom’s legacy. It was a difficult year for all of us as we grieved our beloved leader and mentor. The executive directors established a provincial staff award in Tom’s honour, for the staff member who demonstrates the values and qualities of Integrity,

Commitment and Humanity, exemplified by Tom. The late Dora Alferink was the first recipient of the award, Lorie Arias received the award in 2007, Chris Morris received it in 2011 and Courtney Coqu was the recipient of the 2019 Tom Dykstra Award.

The arrival of the Common Sense Revolution was challenging. It was a time when the political ideology was tough on crime and unfortunately, lacking in common sense, or evidence based practice. The results were the closure of halfway houses for provincial inmates, withdrawal of funding from many organizations, boot camps, and the construction of superjails. Provincial parole was rare, and temporary absences were severely limited. In Ontario, the remand population occupied 60-75 percent of the beds in detention centres, while the number of youth in custody soared. We had some difficult times financially, with the termination of our federal parole contract. While there were promises of federal program funding to replace the revenues from parole, it did not materialize. The training for programs the workers received however, was intensive and helped move our professional staff to an advanced level of clinical skills.

In the mid-nineties, a chance meeting with Judy Webb, who was the principal of Sir George Ross Secondary School, resulted in our foray into work with high-risk youth in the school system. Judy had informed me that she was dealing with a group of students who were non-compliant, aggressive and she was running out of options to deal with them. The next day, I sent a social worker to see Judy and we embarked on provision of John Howard Society social work services in the secondary school for special needs students. Given that the average level of education of inmates in the federal penitentiary was less than grade 9, the





## OUR HISTORY

premise was that if a young person was able to graduate from secondary school, he or she would be less likely to see the inside of a prison cell. The success of this program did not go unnoticed and the Society became known for its service to high risk youth. The City of London offered funding to develop a case management program for homeless youth. Funding continued for ten years. The United Way invited us to participate in the Boullee community development project in collaboration with LUSO Community Services and to establish services for youth in Northwest Middlesex County. The United Way funded these services until recently.

The Society enjoyed a period of expansion with additional funding from the United Way, the funding of the Bail Verification and Supervision Program and the Direct Accountability Program. The United Way Perth-Huron invited us to submit an application for funding institutional services at the Stratford Jail. The Westminster College Foundation funded youth and teen programming and the Ontario Trillium Foundation funded the ICCE (Immigrant Community Capacity and Engagement) Project. Interest in employment with the John Howard Society was at an all time high; the introduction of new employees with enthusiasm and innovative ideas is important. The Society was able to expand service delivery because of the generosity of student interns and volunteers in contributing their time and talents.

Following several years of planning, the London Drug Treatment Court opened in 2010, under the leadership of His Honour Justice Wayne Rabley. The John Howard Society had a pivotal role and was represented in the weekly court.

Intensive services were offered to the clients and strong therapeutic relationships resulted in successful outcomes. At the time, the drug, Fentanyl, had not yet caused the trauma and misery that is evident today. The closure of the Drug Treatment Court was disappointing and it is hoped that the Court, or a better alternative if there is one, is initiated in the future.

As London became a home to many more immigrants, the agency was fortunate to recruit volunteers and employees from newcomer groups. Services were offered in several languages. The United Way looked to the John Howard Society for leadership in promoting diversity in all community agencies. We participated in an initiative that attempted to overcome the barriers to recognition of the credentials of internationally educated immigrants, served on the Board of Directors of Across Languages, and encouraged agencies to follow the John Howard Society in developing a Diversity policy. In 2009, the London Middlesex Local Immigration Partnership was launched to support the successful integration of immigrants into their new communities. As a member of the justice and protection sub-committee, we developed the ICCE Project, to educate newcomer groups about their rights and responsibilities in their own language. Volunteers and employees were engaged from each community group. At the end of each program, the Society held a symposium for workers in community organizations to learn about the culture, history, pre-migration experiences and culturally relevant ways of working with each newcomer group. The program was funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation until 2019.



## OUR HISTORY

I retired in 2014 after a fulfilling career. I was privileged to work among exceptional human beings, who always went the extra mile for the clients and for the good of the John Howard Society. There was never a day that I did not look forward to going to work. I loved my job. It wasn't just a job; it's a way of life. Every day was different. Although some days were difficult and sad, we worked together and had some laughs along the way. Some of our clients were unforgettable characters who have become legends within the organization.

The Society was left in capable hands with an exceptional leader in Taghrid Hussain and an experienced and skilled staff team ready to meet the challenges. Under her leadership, the John Howard Society of London and District has undergone a massive expansion from 16 staff in 2014 to 32 staff in 2022. The Attorney General increased funding for the Bail Verification and Supervision Program and funded the establishment of bail programs in Woodstock, St. Thomas, Goderich and Stratford. Funding was also provided to hire an Indigenous bail worker and to offer enhanced mental health services to bail clients. The Attorney General also asked the Society to apply for the PAR (Partner Assault Response) Program in Huron County, which has since expanded to Perth County. Funding was also received for two housing workers in Stratford.

Taghrid has strong ties to the community and naturally forges collaborative working relationships. Thames Valley Addiction Services entered into an agreement with the John Howard Society to provide enhanced bail services to clients in the drug treatment court program. The London Cross Cultural Learners Centre and John Howard Society entered into an agreement to offer the Newcomer Housing Education Project for Syrian refugees.



## OUR HISTORY



The Society remained open during the pandemic and provided reintegration services to clients exiting the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre, through United Way funding. Canada Border Services Agency contracted with the Society to provide case management and supervision. In 2022, the Society received funding for the program, “Breaking the Cycle of Post-Incarceration Homelessness” from the London Community Foundation. Recently, the Ontario Trillium Foundation provided a grant to purchase a new database.

The work of the John Howard Society is challenging; the needs of the clients are complex with mental health, addictions and trauma at the forefront. The clients lead high-risk lifestyles, often one drug use away from overdose. Losses have been devastating over the past few years. John Howard Society workers continue to build relationships with clients and try to help the best they can. Success is measured in baby steps and celebrated.

The John Howard Society of London and District is seventy-five years old, an outstanding accomplishment. In contemplating the creation of this bit of history, I recalled with affection many of the directors, staff, students, volunteers and clients who have been a part of the journey. They are good and decent people. Each individual has played a significant role in the success of the John Howard Society and left their mark. The collective contribution is enormous. One thing is certain, the John Howard Society remains in the hearts of those who leave; however, few supporters of the Society ever leave. The future is promising for this strong and stable organization. Taghrid and her capable, highly skilled and committed staff will continue to fulfill the Mission of “*Effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes.*”

Lori Cunningham  
Retired Executive Director





## REFLECTING ON THE 60TH ANNIVERSARY PUBLICATION

Fifteen years have passed since we celebrated our 60th anniversary with a publication highlighting some of the more memorable moments, inspiring individuals, promising interventions and social justice issues over the years. In 2007, the 60th Anniversary Committee was comprised of Society board members, Ms. Razia Ali Hassan, Mr. Bert Watts, Mr. Jack Moran, Mr. Gordon Hay and then Executive Director, Lori Cunningham. The committee was responsible for the planning of the 60th anniversary, including the publication, "Celebrating Sixty Years... John Howard Society of London and District". A call for abstracts was issued across the land, and submissions were received throughout the summer and into the early winter. We knew we were asking a lot from people, to devote their time and expertise to our publication, and these were people whom we knew already devoted so much of themselves to the Mission of the Society. We were not disappointed. Our 60th Anniversary publication became a lasting tribute to many community-minded individuals who were committed to addressing issues of social justice, crime prevention, education and furthering research and effective interventions. This edition includes excerpts from our 60th Anniversary publication, highlighting some of those individuals. We hope you will enjoy a trip back in time as you read these articles. Since 1947, numerous dedicated and talented people have contributed to the growth and professionalism of the London Society. It is now 75 years later. We continue to grow. We continue to stay true to our Mission of *"Effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes"*, and we look forward to many more years of promoting positive change in our community.

Anita Parker



## Tom Dykstra "Would that he passed this way again"

Corina Dykstra



Many, too many moons ago (I believe it was around 1966/67), while riding as a passenger in a car, we happened upon a radio interview with a person talking about justice and human dignity. His calm deep voice caught my immediate attention and I could not help but be deeply appreciative of his well thought out sagacious philosophy, as well as the integrity of his consideration. As he formulated his collected thoughts into profound discourse, I was immensely impressed with his ability to put complex concepts and issues into such soul penetrating, understandable language.

Listening, I could hear his compassion enlightened by reason and I was quietly proud for him, as I recognized him to be from my home country. I could not then have imagined that I was listening to my future husband (although I might have said yes to that beautiful voice alone!).

A few years earlier, Tom had emigrated from the Netherlands where he had been educated as a Social Worker and worked at the Juvenile Court at Delft and in the city of Apeldoorn with Jewish teenager survivors of the Holocaust (for which he received a citational prayer from the Jewish rabbi of Toronto upon his death). While in Canada, working at the Juvenile Court in Edmonton, Tom attended a conference of the justice system in Vancouver where he gave a presentation. As related to me later by Mr. Kirkpatrick, the John Howard people in attendance from Toronto were so impressed, they tried to persuade him to move to Ontario and join their cause. Tom found his mission and dedicated his life to the John Howard Society and its mandate (his writing and visual arts would just have to wait).

In his capacity as Director at the London John Howard Society, Tom set out to enlarge the profile of the agency, as well as to realize many aspects of his quest, one of which was to engender in the community a greater awareness of the appalling conditions of the prison systems and the faulty emphasis of the Justice Department on punishment rather than rehabilitation and reconciliation. To this effect Tom, in an effort to mobilize the (very often hostile) community, set out on speaking engagements with local agencies, service clubs, church groups, community organizations etc. Radio interviews and television appearances were also happening and he regularly guest-lectured at the University of Western Ontario Law School as well as the School of Social Work at King's University College. (When once I accompanied him to a lecture at the law school, I was amazed that twice during the lecture the students stood up to applaud him). Not so with the larger community in which he encountered more hostility in those early days than sympathy for the plight of prisoners and their families. "Hanging" judges and crown attorneys, as well as the majority of the public in favour of the death penalty, and a board of education in favour of the strap, were the order of the day and Tom often had to cope with taunts and derision. But Tom never wavered, his argument compelling, his commitment steadfast, his speech calm and dignified, bringing home the message of the intrinsic dignity of human beings.



The fight to do away with capital punishment was on. Tom could not be more aghast that this was still being practiced and believed in by so many (the death penalty in the Netherlands was abolished in 1870) and he gave his considerable efforts and energies to this plight. Many were the evenings and Sundays I accompanied him to discussion panels and speaking engagements and it never failed to amaze me how a rather agitated and adverse audience would become quiet and thoughtful after Tom's responses and speech. I believe it was the happiest day of his life when in 1976, after a fight all across the land and shouldered in good part by the John Howard Society, the Trudeau government abolished capital punishment. I will always remember Tom's radiant face and his enormous sense of relief and satisfaction that this could never come back.

A substantial measure of his time was also spent on ending the usage of the strap in schools. Through research it was demonstrated that the strap was far and far more often administered in schools in poor neighborhoods compared to only occasionally elsewhere and the argument of educational purposes could no longer be upheld. Through much dispute with the board and by building bridges with like-minded people in the community, it was a great achievement that the application of the strap was abandoned in the city. Four years later, in 1980, the Ministry of Education put an end to corporal punishment in schools, which I believe would not have happened but for the push of this endeavour.

Tom had long advocated for a new prison in the city - having seen the appalling conditions in the old jail and again he hit the circuit of speaking engagements, radio

and television interviews as well to search for sympathetic people in the community. When the okay and funding from the Ministry finally came, City Hall in its "unwisdom" tried to designate land in a residential neighborhood. People were up in arms and Tom was in the thick of it. The meeting at City Hall, with an angry crowd in the gallery is well documented. On our way out, Tom was physically attacked on the steps of City Hall by a middle-aged woman pulling on his jacket and pounding on his chest, shouting abuse at him. I will never forget how gracious and gentlemanly he was toward her. It was a winning day when the prison was officially opened by the Minister (in a different part of the city from the controversial site) with a great many people from the community present. Tom received a surprising citation from the Minister, together with Mr. Chapman from the 3-M Company, but the new prison was far more important to him than any mention of honour.

Meanwhile, Tom had established a support group for wives of prisoners. Through a grant from the London Community Foundation, Tom was able to buy a van for the agency which was regularly driven to Kingston by members of his group of volunteers, enabling the women to visit their husbands. Their self-respect was being nurtured and their fragile egos being supported. As one woman once told me: "I didn't know what was coming over me when Tom held a door open for me." With the assistance of Dr. Mario Faveri, a psychologist who ran a morning program on C.F.P.L.- T.V., a T.V. program was created starring Tom and some of the wives of the group. The purpose was twofold: 1). To give the John Howard Society more exposure and 2). To research which segment would have the most positive impact on the public: "expert" (Tom alone), the wives alone, or expert and wives together, the latter being the best outcome (a good bit of information to have for other societies and agencies). A movie giving a glimpse inside a maximum security prison as

well as showing the work of the John Howard Society was made by a professional company, starring Tom and Barbara Hill from the Kingston office. This movie was a great aide in the educational sessions by now being held in the local schools and elsewhere.

Before I could advance him into Hollywood, Tom was deeply immersed in another undertaking. Throughout his life, Tom believed in the importance of early intervention with troubled youth. He envisioned an after school attendance centre at the JHS for adolescents at-risk and was able to convince sympathetic members of the Board of Education to support this proposal. Though funding was obtained, as well as a built-in UWO research component, and the Board's approval secured, low referral rates from area schools undermined the project's viability and to his deep regret, the program had to be discontinued. This was a significant blow for Tom. Despite this disappointment, Tom never lost his vision and enthusiasm. The agency was expanding and the staff increasing. Interns from the 3rd and 4th year School of Social Work helped carry the load.

In his free time, Tom had connected again with his art. Many of his paintings and stain glass windows are hanging in Ontario and New York State. He also deeply believed in the philosophy of the United Way and through a labour of love designed and created a beautiful window which he donated to, and is now hanging in, the Head Office of the United Way of London.

Tom was also happy and deeply gratified to have earned the respect of the Indigenous community which had resulted in an

Indigenous worker coming on board to serve people on the reserve as well as in the larger community. In 1993, a conference "Exploring Indian Reality" was embarked upon in collaboration with the Oneida Nation of the Thames the Ontario Association of Professional Social Workers and the King's University College Faculty of Social Work. It was a high point in his life at the John Howard Society.

Although the John Howard Society was now firmly embedded in the London and Middlesex culture and Tom had gained the respect of the community at large, all during his tenure he had to cope with insufficient funding for the work that needed to be done, causing him great stress. Now that I am being asked to write an anecdote (a great many could be written about him), the following one comes to mind: On one occasion, agency funds were again scarce and Tom was once more having to look at laying off a staff member. Knowing his love of the Caribbean and in an effort to alleviate some of his stress, I got him to play the game 'what would you do if...' At one point over lunch I asked him, "What would you do if we won a million dollars?" (today's equivalent of ten million). Without missing a beat he replied, "Buy the John Howard Society." The measure of his commitment and integrity can never be over-estimated. His passion for human dignity seemed to come from his very soul. (I can still only marvel how this gifted man who could have excelled in so many areas nevertheless chose to champion the human dignity of prisoners and their families). Others must have become aware of this also as Tom was presented with the John Howard Society of Canada Humanitarian Award in 1992 which he received with equal amounts of modesty and appreciation. (Privately I thought he was a precious bead on the world's scanty string of humanitarians.)

During his last year (1993) at the John Howard Society, I was once again listening to the radio while driving in my car and happening upon a dialogue between two people regarding an issue in the justice system when the reporter interrupted with "and what would our guy on Queen's Avenue have to say about that?" - and on came Tom's distinguished voice once more, his comprehensive views on the truth wrapped up in elegant, strong, breathtakingly simplified intelligibility.

Dying was one more thing he had to do. Sustained by an unfaltering trust and soothed by the affection of friends and colleagues, now gravely ill, Tom laid himself down and reclined on his beloved porch. A steady stream of people from all walks of life came to bring their love and respect.

Larger than life, his very being exuded reverence and peace.

*Born of the sun  
he traveled a short while towards the sun  
and left the vivid air  
signed with his honour.*

- Stephen Spender -



*The late Corina Dykstra was the beloved wife of Tom Dykstra, Executive Director of the John Howard Society of London and District from 1969 to 1994. Corina worked for years at the Addiction Research Foundation and was an accomplished writer and storyteller. She was a strong supporter of the Society.*

## CRIME PREVENTION: PUNISHMENT OR PROGRAMS

Barbara Hill

The celebration of the 60th anniversary of the John Howard Society of London and District is also a time to celebrate the network of the John Howard Society of Ontario and the contribution the London affiliate has made and will continue to make to the Mission of "*Effective, just and humane responses to crime and its causes.*" We work towards that Mission through the delivery of services to those in conflict with the law or at-risk, largely provided by affiliates active in 18 communities across the province, and through community education activities and efforts at reform of the criminal justice system. We firmly believe, and research evidence is growing steadily to support this belief, that public protection is best achieved, not by a reactive approach to crime control through a reliance on the police, courts and prisons, but through crime prevention that focuses on a social development approach and programs and services that reduce re-offending. Our activities reflect a commitment to strategies of public protection that have demonstrated effectiveness and confirm justice and compassion as important values of the citizens of this province.

There is growing and consistent evidence that income disparity, unemployment, abuse, family problems and school problems or failure, correlate with crime. Studies by Statistics Canada have found that the socio-demographic characteristics associated with crime include: the male unemployment rate, families living in poverty, proportion living in rented dwellings, families supported by lone-parents and the percentage of the population over the age of 15 without a high school diploma. This evidence suggests that the task of preventing crime has little to do with the criminal justice system.

We can be most effective in preventing crime by building and maintaining healthy communities and healthy individuals. We know that healthy communities and healthy individuals exist in environments where income disparity is mitigated, where quality health care is available and accessible to all, where children are educated in a system that strives to meet the challenges of the myriad of needs that they present, where families are supported to sustain their members and where there are employment opportunities to permit reasonable incomes and prospects for personal development.

To illustrate the value of crime prevention through a social development approach, it is instructive to look at the results of the Perry Preschool Program in the United States. This program offered quality early childhood education to disadvantaged children as well as support and training for their parents. The most recent follow-up study showed that, by the age of 40, the group who participated in the program had significantly fewer lifetime arrests than the no-program group. Evaluations of programs and services focused on recreation, incentives to stay in school, youth employment, family therapy and parent training about at-risk and delinquent pre-adolescents have shown results in reducing involvement in criminal behaviour.

In Ontario today, we see evidence of homelessness, social assistance incomes below the poverty line, individuals disadvantaged with respect to access to health care and persistently higher unemployment rates among youth and other vulnerable groups. All of these problems are occurring at a time when the Ontario economy is booming. The long-term economic, social and human costs of such

social injustice will be high, exposing some to the risk factors associated with crime. What is needed is an agenda which places the focus on and makes the necessary investments in those measures that will make our communities healthier and reduce the risk factors associated with crime. Such an agenda includes adequate social assistance incomes, social housing initiatives, quality early childhood education programs (particularly for vulnerable children), support and training for their parents and a focus on youth employment.

While we maintain that social justice measures are the foundation upon which we build an effective crime control strategy, we also stress that our criminal justice responses must contribute to crime prevention through reduced re-offending. All too often, government action reflects a deterrence approach relying too heavily on punishment alone. While this approach may be politically popular, it gives the citizens of Ontario only the illusion of public safety rather than a principled approach that gives credence to the growing body of research related to "what works" to reduce re-offending. From the research, we know that interventions based on delivering punishment alone do not reduce re-offending. In fact, such interventions have been shown to result in slight increases in the rate of re-offending.

Research demonstrates that the delivery of human services to offenders does result in reducing re-offending and more so if delivered in a clinically appropriate manner. Basically, "clinically appropriate" means the delivery of service with a solid theoretical base by qualified and well supervised staff to the right person, for the right amount of time and for the right reason. Further, research has shown that such interventions delivered in the community have resulted in greater reductions in rates of re-offending than those delivered in custody facilities.

Our belief is that the citizens of Ontario deserve a criminal justice system that works, one that is based on what we know prevents crime and reduces re-offending and one that reflects values of justice and mercy. It is important to recognize that the John Howard Society of London and District has been an important part of the network which works towards that end.

*Barbara Hill retired from her  
position of Director of Policy  
Development at the John Howard  
Society of Ontario*



## REMEMBERING MY FIRST VISIT

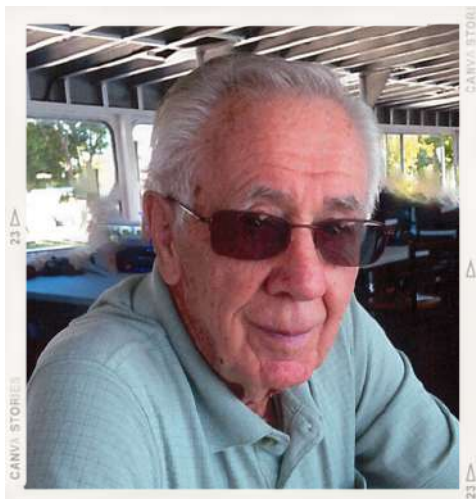
### Jack Moran

Although it is 27 years since I, along with other John Howard Society members visited Attica State Prison, I can still vividly remember standing outside of the walls thinking, "What am I doing here?" I had read about the famous riots at this institution in September of 1971, and you will recall it was here that on the morning of the 9th, in a carefully planned and executed maneuver, a group of prisoners killed one guard and seized 49 others. When the clouds of tear gas lifted on September 13th, there were 30 prisoners and 11 hostages dead.

We had been invited to visit the jail on the 10th anniversary of the riots and it was with some reluctance that I agreed to go. The place reminded me of the old James Cagney movies, with its gritty grey exterior. Nevertheless, we entered and toured the facility with the warden and had a chance to speak to some of the inmates. I can remember talking to one inmate who was legally blind and was in for robbing a bank. That has always puzzled me how does someone legally blind rob a bank? ("with a great deal of difficulty" he says). He swiped a car for his get-a-way and since he couldn't see, piled it up almost immediately and was caught.

Out in the yard called "Times Square", you could see them pumping iron and as Del Bell (London Free Press Reporter) said, "They look like candidates for a Mr. Universe contest, while the guards look like overweight candidates for a heart attack!" Things inside the walls look just like the movies portray, and are just as depressing, but outside there is almost a pastoral, peaceful quality to the trimmed grass and flowers inside the high walls that surround the quadrangle. It is the ultimate illusion.

Over the years I have visited many institutions with the John Howard Society of London and District, including the Kingston Penitentiary, The Kingston Prison for women, Oakridge, Phoenix Correctional Facility, Collins Bay Penitentiary, Michigan State Prison and many others. When we leave these facilities I always feel a rush of relief and the same sense of freedom that the inmates may never have, and for that I am truly thankful.



*The late Jack Moran was a director of the Society from March 15, 1972 to August 31, 2014. He was a tireless community volunteer and businessman.*

## Recollections: A Morning with Nancy Poole and Joseph Beechie

Anita Parker

On April 17, 2007, two long time friends of the John Howard Society of London and District embraced the opportunity to sit together and spend the morning reminiscing. The spacious dining room awaited its guests: coffee, green tea and a deliciously tart-sweet lemon cake had been thoughtfully and carefully arranged on the grand table. The table, one could tell, was accustomed to seating many friends, yet it transformed itself very nicely to suit our intimate gathering on this special day.

Sunlight filtered in gently from the lofty southern window. On the table, tiny crystal animal figurines seemed to pose for us, smiling and welcoming us as we sat together. Memories flowed freely. The laughter, nudged along by generous and gentle humour, was contagious. The scant moments of silence in the room afforded the birds in the garden with an opportunity to share their voices. It seemed that nothing and no one else existed at that time.

"Joe, you were already on the board when I came on". The discussion began before the tape recorder was turned on. She sat at the end of the table, Joe to her left. He looked up and quietly asked for clarification. It was important to know which year... which decade... was being discussed because Nancy and Joe, dear friends and fellow board members, have a lengthy history with the John Howard Society in London. Nancy was elected to the board in February 1961 and Joe, in March 1955. Nancy tried to pinpoint the year, "I know it was the early sixties, because my father had just died and it was before I started to think about Hardy Geddes House in 1965". She smiled, as if recalling the passion she felt almost 50 years earlier. Nancy looked up and

earnestly explained that in those days, she had hoped to help the children before they became clients of the John Howard Society. Prevention, as Nancy demonstrated, is not such a new ideal.

Joe, in his unwavering gentlemanly manner, suggested after Nancy had spoken, that Don Blacklock had been involved with the Society at that time. Mr. Blacklock's name was subsequently found in an old newspaper article. The article, carefully preserved and buried within numerous slightly yellowed, aging binders, announced Mr. Blacklock as the Society's new Executive Director in 1961. Nancy quickly concurred with Joe; the sharpness of their collective memories, astounding. Other names soon flowed: Gordon MacDougall, Milt Keam, John McNee and JHK Broughton. At the mention of Mr. Broughton's name, Joe revealed that John McNee had always referred to him as "prestigious". Smiling broadly, Joe explained that this was because Mr. Broughton was the only individual on the board with three initials! Nancy remembered him fondly as their 'bean counter'. She chuckled and clarified that, as their treasurer, he was entrusted with the responsibility of 'keeping them straight'. Clearly enjoying the play with words, Nancy smiled and hinted that, although he tried, it certainly was a task to keep those board members straight. This seemed to be an accurate recollection since Joe's and Nancy's rapport, peppered with humour and good-natured banter, documented stories that revealed a lively, progressive and esteemed group of individuals.

At the mention of T.S. Caldwell, Joe immediately clarified: his name was Spike Caldwell. Spike, as he was known to the board, was an engineer

with the Department of Highways and, Joe recalled, he was a leader in AA in Ontario. Nancy interjected, "and he had a tremendous sense of humour". An atmosphere immediately filled the room; one could instantly sense the loyalty and respect that his name commanded. Joe explained that, upon Spike's death in 1975, the board learned that Mr. Caldwell had left a substantial portion of his estate to the local John Howard Society. A committee was formed in order to determine the best use of the funds. The Spike Caldwell Fund was established and its uniqueness was underlined by Joe when he explained the process for accessing money: any request must demonstrate that it is for a special cause and the board must vote for approval of the request.

After a solemn pause, other names were introduced. Joe had no difficulty in recalling that J.R. Ramsden had a furniture business on Nightingale Avenue and that he was president at one point in the Society's history. He remembered that Arthur Woods was a bus driver and was interested in assisting individuals in securing employment. Joe's memory was astounding. When Mr. Kirkpatrick's name was mentioned, Nancy's face brightened. She repeated his name... Kirk... and laughed aloud as she remembered the dynamics of their relationship. She described how she and Kirk continuously "crossed swords". Nancy, neither inhibited nor afraid to ask the difficult questions, asked them of Kirk, and he responded with, "No more! No more!" Nancy continued to laugh quietly as Joe embellished the description of Kirk. "He'd been a YMCA director and a Lieutenant in the Navy during the war", Joe added. He also described Kirk as a 'driver for his cause' and recalled that Kirk had received a degree from the University of Chicago. As Joe continued with his story, it was becoming apparent that something most intriguing was about to unfold. Joe's uncanny knack of drawing his audience in was hard at work.

He continued, "I told him that the University of Chicago had the copyright to the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which I knew from general knowledge. And he said I was wrong". Nancy immediately came to Joe's defence and played along with his sad tale of being misunderstood and underestimated. However, Joe finished his story by proudly stating that Kirk eventually learned that Joe was right and as a result, made Joe an honorary life member. Joe seemed amused that such a trivial piece of information had won him the respect of someone such as Mr. Kirkpatrick!

One memory invited another. In speaking about Mr. Kirkpatrick, Joe was reminded of Dr. Carol Buck. But Nancy gently corrected her friend: "She came on later, I think Joe, in the latter part of the sixties." Nancy elaborated with a smile noting that she had been invited to join because there were no women on the board at that time. She added, "There was also no Elizabeth Fry Society, so, I was Elizabeth". Joe, in apparent disagreement with Nancy's assertion that she was brought to the board because of her gender, quickly affirmed Nancy as having brought prestige to the board. With a smile, Nancy humbly responded that she was not certain about that at all. As the two spoke, their bonds of friendship and loyalty were conspicuous and endearing. Joe spoke fondly of Nancy's involvement in the United Way and in the establishment of Hardy Geddes House. He encouraged her to acknowledge the community efforts she had been involved with, in particular, the realization of her dream of a home for troubled boys in London. At that point, it seemed that Nancy had stepped back into another era. She tilted her head ever so gently and looked down at her napkin. The memories were flooding back. She looked up and spoke quietly, yet directly. She explained the difficult situations that many boys found themselves in during those times. They were kicked out of their homes after they turned sixteen and ended up sleeping in cars in used car lots. Nancy knew that those boys needed a safe place to live where

they would be cared for and encouraged to move forward in their lives. Joe interjected, suggesting that the United Way became involved somehow. At that point, Nancy looked directly at Joe, her tone much stronger, "Oh they certainly did... because I wanted them to take ownership. I thought it was important for the United Way to lead in things". Nancy, it was evident, possessed the integrity, the passion and the commitment to truly effect change. However, her humility and honest reflection led her to explain how things really got done in those days. She described a social network of friends and like-minded individuals who possessed the means to lend solid support to endeavours and projects which they believed would enhance the social fabric of their community. Nancy explained, "it was different back then".

Since 'back then', many changes have taken place. Those changes would not have occurred if it weren't for the likes of Nancy Poole, Joseph Beechie and the countless individuals of whom Joe and Nancy spoke on that sunny morning in April. Nancy claimed that one of the most significant moments in the history of the John Howard Society of London and District was the establishment of London's new detention centre. Nancy and Joe confirmed the active role the board had taken over the years. For decades, board members made an extraordinary number of trips to visit other custody facilities: they toured penitentiaries, reformatories and correctional centres in Ontario, detention centres, local jails and prisons in the United States. With each visit, the board members learned more and saw directly what works and what does not. Their continuous journey of exploration and advocacy for change eventually led to the construction of the Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre in London. Nancy pointed out however, that it was a collaborative effort. She recalled the unwavering support of a large number of

community members including Mr. Norman Chapman, then President of EMCO Ltd. Joe remembered a photo of Norm Chapman laying the cornerstone at the new detention centre. After some consideration, he softly added that the picture also included four provincial cabinet ministers, Tom Dykstra, Jack Moran, and himself.

It was not possible to reflect on sixty years of the John Howard Society of London and District without remembering Mr. Tom Dykstra. The absolute admiration in Nancy's voice when she spoke of Tom managed to escape to her lips. "I adored Tom Dykstra", she remarked. Nodding gently, Joe acknowledged Tom's marvelous contributions to the Society. Joe spoke fondly of those who were ardent supporters of Tom's presence in the Society and added how pleased he was when Tom was chosen as Executive Director. Nancy gently set aside the archive binder for a moment and shared her recollection of how approachable, kind and efficient Tom could be. She quietened when she spoke of his illness and, when the inevitable mention of his death arose, Nancy in her calm and composed manner, honoured his memory stating, "He was fabulous. He was a saint walking among us".

In the early years, the board held their meetings at different venues across the city. The Society was without a permanent address and Joe suggested that one of the more significant moments in the history of the Society was the purchase of the house at 601 Queen's Avenue. The archives document March 1968 as the year in which the Society secured its new home. Incredibly, the Society was able to flourish for almost twenty years without a secure office of its own. This was a true testament to the individuals who committed themselves to the Society and its objectives. Joe smiled when he explained how board members were brought to the board. He quipped, "at one time, every friend I ever had was on the board!" Nancy began to laugh and Joe sat back with an impish grin on his face. His friends were certainly



effective. When describing some of the board activities, Nancy and Joe fondly recalled their times together. Nancy, still smiling from Joe's comment explained that the board toured the local jail every year. Joe reminded her of the other institutional trips, which Nancy acknowledged with a nod. When speaking of the local jail tours, Nancy's passion was unmistakable. She described the old Courthouse as a replica of Malahide Castle, built in 1828. She added that, in 1837, the jail was completed and the prisoners were housed in tiny cells, located in the cellar of the Courthouse. Nancy physically cringed when she spoke of those cells. She held out her arms to show the limited space in which the prisoners had to live. As she did so, her usually calm voice raised a notch and she said that the diminutive cell windows can still be seen today from the outside of the building. Nancy and Joe affirmed the Society's commitment to the building of a new jail.

The Society's mandate was not limited to assisting prisoners and ex-offenders. As Joe explained, the Society had always recognized the importance in supporting the wives and children of the men who were receiving services from the Society. He described Tom Dykstra as having a particular zeal for ensuring that the needs of the families of offenders were met and family ties were maintained.

Story after story, memory after memory; it was a wondrous morning as Nancy and Joe stepped back into time. It was peculiar however, that time did not really seem to be of any significance that day. Oh yes, almost sixty years had passed. Yet Nancy and Joe spoke as though it were yesterday. That was the magic of the morning. That was what brought their stories alive. Their generosity and willingness to share is what breathed life into those dusty, yellowed archives. Their voices still resound... their laughter and their calm reassurances to each other are easily recalled as their words are captured in writing. However, the spirit of that morning can never be held within the pages of a book; no matter how eloquent, no matter how simple. There are no words with which one could adequately share the nuances, the subtleties and the sense of privilege that one felt at being invited into that room on that very special day.

*Nancy Poole is a former director and long time supporter of the Society. The late Joseph Beechie was a director with the Society from 1955 to March 25, 2009. Anita Parker is the Indigenous Services Program Supervisor.*

## Religion and the Rise of John Howard

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The appointment of John Howard as High Sheriff of Bedfordshire in 1773 is perhaps the most curious event of his career. His well-known religious conviction as a Dissenter not only made the appointment unusual but also illegal; unless there are reasons for it that have not, to this point, been fully considered. Yet the appointment is most significant, because it represented the turning point in his life, without which his reforms and momentous work on The State of Prisons in England and Wales would not have occurred.

### The Test Act

According to all accounts, John Howard was a lifelong Baptist, a Dissenter from the official Church of England, and as such would not have been eligible for public office on account of the Test Act. The Act was no trivial matter and was tied to the state security of England, coming, as it did, after one hundred and fifty years of religious strife, conspiracy, treason and power struggles that tore England, as well as Europe, into bloody pieces; and which cannot be fully understood without knowing something of its background.

Simply put, the Test Act excluded from office anyone who would not participate in the Anglican Communion, which was, and still is, based on the doctrine of transubstantiation, the belief that in the Communion Service, the wafer and wine are transformed into the real substance of Christ's body and blood. By extension, refusal to accept the Anglican sacrament carried with it the suspicion of opposition to the King, as supreme authority and protector of the English Church, and

therefore of treason. The Test Act followed the Corporation Act which applied the same requirement to anyone holding office in Corporate Towns. The test of taking the Anglican Communion not only excluded all Protestant Non-conformists and Dissenters, who avowedly rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation, from taking office but also Roman Catholics, who regarded the Anglican Church as heretical. Moreover, the Act not only had the effect of prohibiting any Non-conformist from holding public office but made it illegal for anyone to take the Communion under false pretenses in order to obtain office. The penalty for the offence was severe at five hundred pounds, about five thousand dollars today, and a lifetime ban from any office whatsoever, not just the one in question. Inability to pay the fine meant immediate jail and all of its horrors, without chance of release until the fine was paid. More open hostility to the state Church and the King's role as its head led to more severe consequences. Yet, Dissenter or not, in order to become Sheriff, John Howard was required to take the Anglican sacrament.

Being aware of John Howard's staunch dissenting orientation, some of his biographers have mused about whether he simply held his nose and swallowed or managed to find a way around not taking the sacrament. Perhaps one might speculate that he had friends in high places, who may have put in a word and protected him from the rigors of the law. Such friends he had. His membership to the prestigious Royal Society, quite apart from his scientific papers on the effects of temperature changes on the growth of plants, required that he was nominated by someone of importance within the Society. However, there is no record of who that person was. Some of his close

friends and colleagues in his prison enterprise were members of the House of Commons. On the other hand, perhaps it was his well-known tolerance of differing religious beliefs, despite his commitment to Dissent from England's official religion, that enabled him to take the Anglican Communion in full conscience. After all, both his wives were Anglican and he attended whatever local church existed wherever he stayed on his far-reaching travels, including Catholic services when on the Continent of Europe. But there is no evidence of this being the reason for him being able, in conscience, to meet the requirements of his appointment.

### **The Reformation in Europe and England**

What was it that made the Test Act so important for the security of England that it imposed its restrictions on the consciences of those seeking public office, and why was it an issue in the appointment of John Howard as Sheriff? The reasons for the Act lie deep in the history of England's safety and security from internal and foreign threat to the Throne and its Establishment. Its beginning can be found in the idea of John Wycliffe, the fourteenth century English minister, that only the Bible contained the word of God, not the church hierarchy, and that there was no need of prelates or Popes to intercede on behalf of mankind and his maker. The same idea was fundamental to the writings and teachings of John Huss, Martin Luther, John Calvin and others on the Continent whose doctrines released the population from dependence on the priesthood for its ultimate salvation and, in so doing, shook the foundations of the Episcopalian establishment. Following Martin Luther's publication of his thesis in Wittenberg in 1517, this new theology rapidly permeated the social and political fabric

of a European civilization that was emerging from the middle ages. They took root particularly among the emerging mercantile and commercial class whose entrepreneurial nature drew them to the concept of spiritual independence and the idea that all aspects of life acted as a form of worship, including work and making money. Known as the Reformation, this new religious movement, became the doctrine of aspiring capitalism and fledgling democracy. On the Continent of Europe, the Reformation crossed traditional boundaries of power and control, unleashing forces that threatened established hierarchies, both temporal and spiritual, and led to a power struggle that threw princes and Popes into thirty years of brutal warfare in the name of religion. It was against this backdrop of bloodshed and fear that all monarchs and princes took heed of religious reform. It was to these religious roots that John Howard and his family belonged.

### **The Fight For Control in England**

In England, the Reformation took a different turn. The English Church under Henry VIII simply sought to detach itself from Papal control and most of its doctrines without altering its Episcopalian structure or its fundamental sacraments. The King, who was pronounced "Defender of the Faith" by the Pope for declaring Martin Luther a heretic, went a step too far when he declared himself head of the Church of England and thereby the authority that confirmed bishops in their offices. By these actions, Henry had opened the door to England's own form of Protestantism, known as Anglicanism, and, at the same time, by invoking Papal censure, set the scene for centuries of conflict between Catholics and English Protestants for control of the throne of England and with it the Church.

The resulting power struggle between Catholic and Anglican factions began immediately on the death of the king. Under the successive rules of Henry's daughters, Mary (Catholic) and Elizabeth (Anglican), the heads of chancellors, bishops and royalty rolled off the block, not to mention those who were hung, drawn and quartered (the state form of execution) or burned at the stake, in the name of treason and the preservation of the state religion and England's security. The launching of the Spanish Armada against Elizabeth by Catholic Spain and the Catholic "Gunpowder Plot" to blow up parliament in 1605, during the reign of her successor, James I, dramatically heightened the need for security against the external and internal threat of Catholicism.

### **The Puritan Revolution**

While all this was going on, a potentially new threat was developing from the opposite end of the religious spectrum. A new class of Englishman, that same class of Calvinist merchants that was reshaping the European economic and political landscape, was making inroads into England's religious and social mosaic. They called themselves Puritans and Non-conformists, who believed in the election of church ministers by the lay congregation, not their ordination and appointment by bishops. But, being Protestant, the new, democratic style of church-goers, were not seen, at first, as a threat to the throne. However, in the process of setting up churches and propagating their doctrines throughout the land, the Non-conformist commercial class was steadily buying its way into the English countryside at the expense of an increasingly bankrupt aristocracy and, at the same time, claiming the seats in Parliament that went with their new found positions as the nation's country gentry. In the cities and ports, these same tough-minded businessmen formed the new merchant

class that came to control the wealth derived from the nation's growing revenue from trade. They too found their way into Parliament through the city constituencies.

Once elected and summoned to Parliament, friction arose between the emerging Puritan middle class and both Kings James I and Charles I over taxes and the old administrative ways that excluded the commercial class. The parliamentary threat to undermine the King's traditional claims to rule by Divine Right of Kings, led Charles I to try governing without Parliament. But the need for revenue eventually forced the King to call Parliament to approve tax levies. The ensuing battle between King and Parliament for control of revenue and administration led ultimately to civil war, largely drawn up along the lines of the Established Church and the landed aristocracy and, on the other side, the Puritan middle class who represented the parliamentary forces. Parliament's victory, and the beheading of Charles I in 1648, inaugurated twelve years of puritanical rule by Parliament, led by Oliver Cromwell, during which the Episcopalian Church was banned.

But the pendulum of religious and political strife continued to swing. Soon, the new regime was forced to defend itself against invasion by "Bonnie Prince Charlie", who came from Scotland with an army of Catholic Frenchmen and loyal Scotsmen, in an attempt to regain his father's throne and control of the English Church. The Prince's loyalist forces met Cromwell's army at the strategic point of Warrington (coincidentally, the town where John Howard's book on prisons would be published a century later) only to be routed. But the imposition of a puritanical yoke by parliament on a nation dedicated to beer and sports on weekends ultimately led to its own defeat. After Cromwell's death in 1658 and two years of ineffective rule by his son, Richard, the monarchy in the form of Charles II, "the Bonnie



Prince", was called back by a Parliament in disarray and restored by a nation weary of Puritanism.

### **The Restoration of the Monarchy and the Laws Governing Religion**

The restoration of the King meant a series of Acts of Parliament returning the monarchy to some of its old powers but also investing parliament with some powers of its own, such as the right to approve taxation. But there was also a series of Acts that were designed to prevent any further threat to the establishment from its religious opponents. These laws greatly limited the activities of Non-conformists by expelling Puritan clergy from their livings, forbidding them from living within five miles of any corporate town, and prohibiting them from keeping schools and teaching their religious principles to young folk; all carrying severe penalties, including fines, imprisonment and transportation. Catholics were restricted by a law against unlawful assembly, forcing them to practice their religion only within the confines of their own homes. Amid this anti-Calvinist/Catholic legislation was the Test Act, the aforementioned Act that required demonstrable adherence to the state religion in order to hold public office as a defence against sedition and subversion by antagonistic religious forces. In order to avoid such harsh impositions, Non-conformists now took the name Dissenters, those who respectfully disagreed with Anglican doctrine but did not oppose the Church's position as England's official religion nor its practices and doctrines. As Calvinists, now Dissenters, this was the religious persuasion to which the Howards belonged.

### **The Catholic Resurgence**

But the passing of the Test Act caused the religious pendulum to swing back again, this

time threatening the security of the English Church from the Catholic end of the religious spectrum. One of the first casualties of the Act was James, Duke of York, the King's younger brother and heir to the throne, who was disclosed as a closet Catholic and as a result, forced to resign his post as Lord High Admiral. But, now, the prospect of James' accession to the throne raised all the old fears of Catholic succession and a bloody return to Catholic rule.

On the death of his childless brother, Charles II, James II duly became King, and as sure as night follows day, began replacing public servants in high office, University Chancellors, judges and army officers with Catholics. Englishmen gritted their teeth, knowing that James' only child and heir to the throne was his daughter Mary, who was a Protestant and married to William of Orange, King of Protestant Holland. But the unexpected announcement of the birth of a boy, from a pregnancy that had been kept secret in the palace, one who would become the next king, raised anew the prospect of a succession of Catholic monarchs.

The nightmare of renewed religious strife was again real. In a bold stroke, seven of England's bishops got together and wrote to King William in Holland, inviting him to invade England and install his wife on the throne. William responded by arriving in England at the head of an army. King James, rather than fight, abdicated the throne and fled with his entourage to Catholic France with their child successor, who promptly became "the Pretender" to the English throne and, as such, a renewed threat to England from abroad. Predictably, the "Jacobite" rebellion came with the intent of installing the Pretender to the throne but was quickly put down. However, the abortive rebellion pointed to the fact that there still existed a Catholic cadre in England, ready to resume control by force of arm. As if this were not enough to underscore the necessity of the Test Act to preserve the Establishment against

subversion by any non-conformist, be they Catholic or Protestant, the Gordon riots of 1780, coming just seven years after John Howard's appointment as Sheriff, were prompted by anti-Catholic sentiment and ruthlessly put down with three of the rioters, a poor sailor and two prostitutes, being the last to be hanged on Tower Hill where so many before them had died in the name of religion.

### **John Howard the Dissenter**

It was against this background of seemingly endless religious upheaval, internal sedition and threat of foreign invasion that John Howard lived as a Dissenter. His father, and probably his grandfather too, were Dissenters of the same Calvinistic persuasion that not two generations previously had dethroned and beheaded the King. John Howard the younger was brought up in this same strict tradition. The elder Howard was a successful merchant in the carpet business and owned property in London; as well as a small country estate in Cardington, Bedfordshire, which he inherited from his mother. This was the estate that his son would eventually inherit and become the base of his activities in Bedford that preceded his appointment as Sheriff.

After the death of his father (his mother died when he was still a child), John Howard at first traveled in Europe and then settled in London, living off rents from the properties and the fortune he inherited from his father. But on the death of his first wife, Howard moved to the estate in Cardington. Like the other new landed Gentry, Howard demonstrated the same zeal and acquisitiveness that was typical of the same puritan mentality that drove his forebears and counterparts. At Cardington, he attended to his new agricultural lifestyle, experimenting with agricultural science and at the same time, systematically acquired property until he became the second largest

landowner in Cardington, next to his distant relative, Samuel Whitbread. With the same mixture of material progress and religion, John Howard replaced the mud huts of his tenants with thatched cottages, paid for the education of their children; and, when some of the Baptist congregation in Cardington split off from the main congregation to practice as Independents, he funded the building of a church for them.

Given his local prominence and noticeable community activities, John Howard's religious persuasion could not have gone unnoticed. Also, his friends were prominent Dissenters. One of them, Dr. Richard Price, was a Dissenter and well known political critic and an opponent of Edmund Burke, the philosopher politician; who was also a friend of Benjamin Franklin and George Washington and an advocate of civil liberties for the American colonists. With his friends, John Howard is known to have attended some of the rallies of the American lobbyists who were in England to persuade parliament to grant a degree of autonomy in the colonies, all treading a fine line with sedition in the process. His other friends were mainly prominent Dissenters and Quakers.

### **John Howard and the Test Act**

Given the history of religious conflict in England and the reasons for the Test Act, it is impossible that a known Dissenter of John Howard's reputation could have avoided the Test Act in order to become Sheriff, or of being identified as an imposter and duly charged and convicted as such under the Act. Certainly, if the Lord High Admiral, who was brother to the King, could not get around the Act, how would a meager County Sheriff avoid it? Furthermore, in 1774, John Howard ran in the local elections for parliament. Though unsuccessful, he must have taken the required test under the Act in order to run, or would be expected to, had he won. He was also a long-term member of the local Turnpike Committee that controlled the fees for use of a highway that ran through Cardington, until his death; again, although minor by comparison, a public post.

Also, John Howard was a man who struggled deeply with matters of conscience and questions of his own spiritual/integrity, as his diaries show, and one who was a strict disciplinarian in his own affairs. In conscience, he could not have acted fraudulently or corruptly in the process of his appointment to such high office as Sheriff of the County, or for that matter in anything else in his life.

In light of this, one is bound to conclude that John Howard complied with the Test Act in full conscience as one who accepted the Anglican form of communion in all of its meaning and implications. To all intents and purposes John Howard accepted the doctrines and practices of the Church of England, if he did not actually convert to Anglicanism itself. Clearly, his two marriages to women of the Anglican faith presented no problem to him, although it is following his appointment as Sheriff that his well-known toleration of other faiths became more evident. His attendance at Catholic services while on the Continent of Europe would have been abhorrent to strict Calvinists but obviously not to himself. As to why any conversion or compromise of conscience would have been hidden can be explained by Howard's private nature. Although famous for his mission, he was intensely private, even reclusive, in his personal life. An example of his practice of strict privacy would be that of his public image. It was thought that no true portrait of John Howard existed because he abhorred vanity and would not sit for artists; yet, it was discovered after his death that, in fact, he sat for five sessions for the American painter Mather Brown (the resulting portrait in oil hangs in the National Portrait Gallery in London, England) and also for T. Holloway, whose portrait of Howard hung in Howard's own house and was surrendered posthumously to a biographer by his housekeeper Ms. Prole.

Perhaps one other fact supporting the argument that Howard made some accommodation with the requirements of the Test Act, more than any other piece of circumstantial evidence, is that, on his deathbed, John Howard requested burial according to rites in the Book of Prayer, the official Anglican prayer book. Given that fact, it seems most probably that John Howard, at some time previously, had privately converted to Anglicanism, if only in his own conscience, most likely in order to meet the requirements of his appointment to the office of Sheriff. One thing can be counted on, especially in light of the religious tensions of the period: had Howard not agreed to meet the requirements of the Test Act, he would not have been appointed Sheriff; and, as a result, he would not have been able to access the Bedford County jail as one of his functions as Sheriff. From there, he would not have been able to access other town and County jails as one of the fraternity of Sheriffs. His prison mission would not, could not, have happened, nor all that followed as a result, including the formation of those organizations that dedicated themselves to continuing his mission under his name. Instead, with just one son, who died without children in a mental hospital, John Howard would have lived and died as a typical member of the eighteenth century country Gentry, no more than a name in the annals of the local history of Cardington.

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## Looking Back, Looking Ahead

Graham Stewart

Like the John Howard Society of London, I am 60 years old. Unlike the John Howard Society of London I am on the brink of retirement — which only shows that good ideas survive us all. Nevertheless, the London folks asked me to look back at some of the changes and themes that I have noticed since I began with the John Howard Society in 1969 and also to venture a guess about what we might expect in the days ahead.

I cannot give an objective account of the developments in corrections in Canada over my years with the Society. I can just tell it like I saw it and hope that my subjective perspective is of use to some others.

My work began with John Howard Society in 1969 but my interest in this field developed in 1965. At that time I was a teenager in high school and smack dab in the middle of the 60's. The times were energized, irreverent, challenging and, most importantly, optimistic. One of the issues of the day was the Bill before the House of Commons to abolish the death penalty. Thanks to my English teacher, I became interested in the subject and, by extension, criminal justice issues generally.

In the context of the times I felt that I was at a major turning point for civilization — certainly criminal justice. After all, it must mean something profound when society chooses to not kill its citizens. It must be a turning point when criminal justice stops using death as an alternative to "corrections." It seemed to me that this was the best moment to be involved in criminal justice. I was hooked.

The term "corrections" was still new. It was before the "Penitentiary Service" was renamed "Correctional Service." The consensus was growing quickly that it wasn't good enough for the criminal justice system simply to punish. The expectation was that we should change behaviour and there was little doubt that change could be achieved. Parole was a good example of people's optimism about corrections. The Parole Act had been passed in 1958 and it empowered seven people to order the release of virtually anyone, any time and for whatever reason they thought was reasonable. They believed first, that prison was overused and second, in the value of gradual release. The parole grant rate was over 60% — a level never approached since. It is beyond our imagination to envision a reform like that occurring today.

The enthusiasm for parole led to the development of Mandatory Supervision, now called Statutory Release, to ensure that every person being released from a federal prison was subject to gradual release with supervision and support. A good idea, though poorly implemented, as it came at the expense of remission. With our current government now pledging to abolish Statutory Release, without reinstating remission, the effect will be to lengthen the time in prison for the majority of offenders by fifty percent!

The notion of gradual release and support followed the road laid out by the John Howard Society in voluntary aftercare. No wonder the John Howard Society became a major agency in the provision of parole supervision. The first question on the parole application form was "Who will be your supervisor?" Because there were so few staff with the National Parole Service, often the only choice



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people had for someone willing to be their supervisor was the John Howard Society. The focus was on care far more than on supervision. In fact it was very difficult to suspend or revoke a parole. Parole was a new, innovative practice — a place where progressive people wanted to be. They were professionally trained people — clergy, social workers, teachers who brought their ethics, standards and practices with them. They had very broad discretion and called the people they worked with "clients," "inmates" or "parolees."

"Community corrections" was the answer. Prisons were understood to be a failure. How could a place of social isolation, violence, humiliation and idleness improve people? It was generally thought that the future of imprisonment would be very limited with prisons giving way to community programs for the majority and quasi-hospital settings for the few remaining. There was considerable movement in favour of a "moratorium on prison construction." No one wanted a prison in their riding, anyway. In fact, London defeated an attempt to build a small medium security prison there. Today, prisons are often viewed as being a non-polluting industry offering jobs. "Superjails" to replace local jails would have been unimaginable in that era.

Prison "rehabilitation" was primarily trades training. Much of the focus of the times was on the social determinants of crime rather than the individual's proclivities or psychological functioning. Punishment had little place in an environment where we thought social policy and practice condemned people to a life of crime. Punishment was to rehabilitation as archaic as bleeding was to medicine. It was the remnants of a brutal stage in the evolution of humans from which we were awakening.

We operated on the basis of theory and beliefs. We had little empirical evidence to help. The field was filled with positive expectations and belief about what worked. But we needed evidence. As criminologists began to collect evidence it was, at first, crude and depressing — culminating with the famous "nothing works" conclusion incorrectly attributed to Robert Martinson in 1974 and too quickly embraced by both the right — to justify punishment and the death penalty — and the left, who resisted the trend towards indeterminate sentences for rehabilitation. It quickly became the popular view in the minds of many and had a hugely corrosive impact on "corrections" that is still felt today.

By the time the 1970's had passed the rehabilitative ideal bubble had burst and those of us who had previously viewed ourselves as being "progressive" felt we had been discredited by the pragmatists of the day. Some persisted with their principles, beliefs and values — and were eventually exonerated by Canadian researchers like Gendreau, Andrews and Bonta. Others took a pragmatic course and operated without expectation of change in their clients. They came to populate much of the corrections system as the old professions were replaced by younger untrained people who were taught to be "case managers." The term "client," "inmate" "prisoner" or "parolee" gave way to the label "offender" as those terms were "deemed" too complicated. The new term "offender" was used for everyone, forever — like a life-long stain. Today it is thoroughly entrenched in the lexicon of corrections. It is an awful label that I try to avoid.

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The new pragmatist managers crowded out the social worker idealists. It was not surprising to see the role of the John Howard Society in correctional programs, like parole, dissolve during those years.

But if the rehabilitative bubble burst in the late 70s, it began to re-appear in the 1980's and 1990's. Almost from the moment of Martinson's paper, contrary evidence began to emerge; however, as the evidence of effectiveness accumulated, it was becoming clear that not everything that felt good was necessarily doing good. This meant that responsible organizations sometimes had to change their strategies and programs even as their values, principles and hopes were confirmed. Those kinds of changes are never easy but they are crucial for an organization to remain relevant and have integrity. It was particularly difficult when the programs that need to change are the ones with the greatest interest and sympathy from the public and funding bodies. It is a continuing and difficult test of professionalism that John Howard Societies have had to face.

The new evidence of effectiveness was the good news, but it became increasingly apparent that success rates mattered little in the face of sensational incidents of failure. Stories mattered more than statistics. Correctional policy moved increasingly to avoid blame rather than reduce risk. Tough new measures such as detention, dropping parole rates, more restrictive release conditions and public disclosure of high-risk people on release followed in quick succession over the ensuing decade.

As the effectiveness of gradual release was documented, gradual release was increasingly restricted in its application. As the failure of mandatory minimum sentences and large scale imprisonment practices were discredited by research, they were embraced in criminal justice policies and laws. "Public safety" replaced "rehabilitation" in corrections and in public discourse. "Rehabilitation" is directed towards life in the community. "Public safety" usually implies imprisonment. "Public Safety" became the pat answer for any situation or audience.

If "public safety" replaced "rehabilitation," it also replaced "justice". Retributive justice implies limits. Punishment is inherently negative and, therefore, must be restrained through the application of principles. "Public Safety" came to justify detention according to risk rather than one's crime or culpability as reflected in new measures such as indefinite detention as a dangerous offender, three strikes, detention to warrant expiry date, long term supervision orders, peace bonds, and declines in parole and temporary absence provisions.

Correctional practices began increasingly to address those who were seen as low risk and "safe" to include in rehabilitative programs and services. They were given shorter sentences, more programming, education and access to gradual release. Those who were seen as high risk got longer sentences, were less likely to get parole, might well be detained, publicly disclosed, and excluded from community support and treatment. After release some were publicly disclosed and subsequently chased from community to community as though they were fugitives: all in the name of public safety.

Those who advocated for services for these less attractive people often became the target of overt public criticism. Nevertheless, some took the evidence of effectiveness and moved aggressively to

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work with the high risk groups — with great effect. Few know of the programs we operate across Canada with the high risk groups but they are the ones I am most proud of and are operated by the people I most admire. They are the leaders who use their principles and values as motivation and their intelligence and knowledge as measures to achieve real effects — even while suffering public criticism and sometimes blame when an offence occurs.

Today we have tons of evidence but little reason to believe that it influences either public attitudes or public policy. Indeed, the reverse is becoming the norm in political circles: evidence is confused, manipulated and just made up to suit the ideology of government or what they perceive to be the current public attitude. Enormous damage is being done every day. It takes much longer to put programs in place than to destroy them. It may well take a hundred years or more before the "superjails" of Ontario can be abandoned. Prisons don't wear out quickly.

Current governments apparently believe that there are no problems that can't be solved with imprisonment. Every justice bill is a sentencing bill — often imposing harsh penalties while limiting the discretion of courts. Principle-based sentencing, that considers the circumstances of the accused and the offence, give way to inflexible and harsh sentences decided by politicians in advance of the crime while posturing for the 20 second news clip and, in the process, undermining the judiciary and the principles of sentencing in the eyes of the public.

We know better. In my early years with the John Howard Society, Canada had an incarceration rate of 89/100,000 citizens. At that time the US rate was 149/100,000. In both countries that rate had remained stable for decades. Today the incarceration rate in Canada has barely changed at 108/100,000 but in the US the rate has soared to 749/100,000. Yet crime trends (not rates) in both countries moved in unison — both up and down over those intervening years in astonishingly similar patterns. We were the control group in an enormous international experiment on the effects of mass incarceration. We looked awfully smart compared to our American neighbours who spent untold billions of dollars and literally locked up 2 million people each year. But for reasons that boggle the mind, Canadian governments of all stripes and levels are now adopting the US policies at blinding speed. When the US lunged into this experiment in the 1970's they did not have the evidence that we have today of how badly the exercise would turn out. It was also a time when crime rates were rising dramatically. So perhaps we need to judge them in the context of the time. But what is our excuse in Canada when we have the benefit of the American experience and in the face of crime rates that have been declining steadily for 15 years?

Is this love affair with imprisonment an aberration? Are we just temporarily slipping back to the "nothing works" days or is it an indication of the future in Canadian criminal justice policy? In fact, it is not all bad news. In the midst of the hard times in public policy, a few gems slipped through — one of which was the Youth Criminal Justice Act that reduced the imprisonment rate of young people by about 50% in just over a year. Another was the sentencing legislation of the 1990's that kept a cap on imprisonment rates while the US adopted them without restraint and, yes, we did stop killing people in the name of justice. This simply makes the point that our crime policies are choices: they are not responses to an inevitable and unpreventable tide.

## Looking Ahead

I don't know the future. As I look back over my career I can only be humbled as I realize how little of what occurred over those years was actually predicted more than a few months before it happened. I think it is safe to predict, however, that in the next few years John Howard Society leadership will confront huge challenges and crucial decisions. It will take clear principles and values, expert knowledge, skill and courage to make a positive difference for our clients and our communities.

Can we find ways to generate support through a better informed public that supports our mission and what we do? Can we find a stronger voice amongst the policy makers and politicians? Do we really have a choice? This won't be easy. But neither was it easy for those who founded this organization in the midst of the depression with no research evidence and no resources — just an unshakable belief in the value of every life, the potential of people to change, and the obligation of every community to contribute. Having that foundation of values and beliefs makes it much easier to address the problems we will face in the future — so long as we continue to honour them.

We can't make it alone. John Howard Society offices are not isolated islands. Our common name is our greatest asset and the bond that makes cooperation possible. We must continue to honour and protect the name by contributing to its value and being accountable to the Society as a whole for what we do. The demands on executive directors are enormous. The demands on boards of directors are also enormous.

No one can deal with the obligations, liabilities, mission and public policy issues while providing evidence-based, targeted, highly professional, community services if they work alone. But we don't need to work alone. We have seen significant progress in recent years at both the national and provincial levels of the Society to set standards, be accountable to one another, through agreements of association and certification, and to support one another to deal with the increasingly complex and politically dangerous environment in which we work.

One thing is for sure, we need an informed, coordinated, credible and principle-based John Howard Society today more than I have seen in my entire career. As my formal career ends with the John Howard Society, I worry about the future, as I always have, but I also feel we have shown that we have the long-standing values and principles, the capacity to learn, the willingness to change, and the tenacity to prevail. We may not win many battles but we can be true to our founders and soldiers like Tom Dykstra and Lori Cunningham who have served the London Society for so long and with such distinction. We can honour them by being true to the values they have instilled in the organization.

We can be on the right side of history. We just have to make the right choices.

*Graham Stewart is the retired  
Executive Director of the John  
Howard Society of Canada*



## Partnership Between King's University College School of Social Work and John Howard Society of London and District

King's University College Faculty of Social Work and John Howard Society have been loyal partners since the seventies. A member of the faculty from King's has been a board director for decades and the Society collaborated with King's to offer a symposium with Rupert Ross as the keynote speaker, "Exploring Indian Reality."

While the Society provided field placements for two or more students annually, King's provided excellent training for staff field supervisors. Experienced field instructors sat on committees to review the curriculum, participated in the organization of an Association of Field Practice Educator and have been awarded Honorary Academic Status with the title, "Adjunct Professor of Field Practice."

**Lori Cunningham**  
(Executive Director - Retired)

King's University College School of Social Work appreciates its longstanding partnership with the John Howard Society of London and District to provide social work field education.

The learning opportunities available to students are exceptional and the agency also benefits as students bring with them a fresh perspective and the latest in theoretical knowledge from the classroom.

The John Howard Society of London and District supports social work students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Students develop skills in assessment as well as individual, group and family counselling. Few other organizations offer the range and depth of direct practice learning opportunities.



Students link theory to practice throughout their field placement experience and much of their instruction and understanding occurs in weekly supervision meetings with their field instructor(s). The mentorship provided by field instructors at the John Howard Society of London and District is exemplary. Three field instructors have been formally recognized by King's as recipients of the Rose Marie Jaco Award for Excellence in Social Work Field Practice Education: Anita Parker (2015-16), and Kathleen Lowe and Juli McGrenere (2016-17).

In addition to providing outstanding field instruction, staff from John Howard Society of London and District have participated in the Field Education Committee at King's representing the interests of the justice sector. Their perspective has been invaluable in informing policies and procedures related to social work field education.

King's School of Social Work acknowledges with gratitude the many contributions to our community made by the John Howard Society of London and District throughout their 75-year

history. We look forward to our continued partnership around social work field education.

**King's School of Social Work, Kylene Dube and Mary Kay Arundel, Coordinators of Field Education.**

## Reflections From Supervisors

I was asked to supervise a student after I was employed by the Society and for many years, I was a field supervisor for social work students, primarily from King's. John Howard Society seemed to attract the best students and the truth is that I learned much more from my students than they learned from me. Carol Reid and I often commented that having students ensured that we stayed on top of our game. Upon arrival, the students were idealistic, energetic and enthusiastic. There were so many learning opportunities for students because of the wide range of programs. Our clients connected well with our students, loving the idea that they were helping to educate social workers. Usually by November, students were functioning as professional social workers and making strong contributions to the John Howard Society.

**Lori Cunningham - Practicum Supervisor**

One of my students made me a homemade picture with the caption: "To Teach is to Touch a Life Forever." The Society has a rich history of training social work students and I was encouraged to start training King's School of Social Work students in January 2002. Fast forward now to 2022. I cannot imagine not having a student to mentor now. It has become one of the most cherished parts of my existence as a social worker at the Society. I have learned so much from so many over the years and am so grateful for this experience and the rich reward of seeing my/our students (it is a team-teaching effort) go out into the world to start their careers

while bringing the values, attitudes and beliefs of the Society with them. I realize the impact they will have in their new settings and the lives they will touch and enrich. My life has been touched forever as a practicum supervisor.

**Kathleen Lowe - Practicum Supervisor**

When going through my social work schooling, I always gained the most experience through my placements. And I have always maintained that social work placements are the most beneficial part of social work education, as it is during placement that you really get to utilize all of the skills that you have gained through classes and implement them in the real world. Because of this, I have always found the social work placement to be an important part of the social work experience and have used this belief in my work with social work students completing their placement at the John Howard Society.

Each of the students that have come through the John Howard Society have made meaningful contributions to our clients on their way to making meaningful contributions in their careers. It has been a pleasure supervising students and helping them on their social work journey.

**Juli McGrenere - Practicum Supervisor**

**Additional Society Supervisors:**

**Tracy Gough - Practicum Supervisor**

**Anita Parker - Practicum Supervisor**

## Reflections from Social Work Practicum Students

I was fortunate to complete my fourth-year internship for the Bachelor of Social Work Program, at the John Howard Society, under the supervision of Tom Dykstra. Karen Saylor and I developed a court worker program. We were given more responsibility and autonomy than all of the other students in our class. We would attend court to provide information and

referrals to family members of accused persons. We also conducted intake interviews, counselled clients in the office and visited inmates in the County Jail. Our supervision meetings were collegial, sharing information, ideas and experiences. With a hybrid placement of clinical work and community development, Tom seemed to enjoy observing our attempts to garner support for our program with stakeholders at the courthouse, while attempting to integrate theoretical interventions in our work with clients. Tom seemed energized by our interest in social justice. He encouraged us to develop our own natural style. We learned that our social work values aligned with the values and principles of the John Howard Society.

**Lori Cunningham, 4th Year BSW Practicum Student, King's University College, School of Social Work, 1975-1976**

They encouraged me to be open and honest regarding my learning needs...They ensured that my knowledge and skills were respected and valued, and also demonstrated commitment to further my skills and helped me to understand more about who I am as a Social Worker. Their supervision ensured I was practicing in line with Social Work values, and they consistently encouraged critical inquiry and reflection on a number of different subjects.

**Natalie Whitney, MSW Practicum Student, King's University College, School of Social Work, 2019**

My supervision experience at the John Howard Society will forever impact my career as a social worker. As a recent immigrant developing my skills in social work, having a practicum that would enhance my learning and provide a sense of belonging was crucial for me. My supervisors supported my learning, appreciated my unique experience,

and enhanced my skills. My supervisors were excited to listen to my perspective and gently shared theirs with me. My supervision experience has enhanced my skills as a social worker, but most importantly, having a sense of belonging has made me a more confident social worker. Thank you so much, John Howard Society; thank you, Kathleen and Juli.

**Zainab Bakare, 4th Year BSW Practicum Student, King's University College, School of Social Work, 2021**

I completed my 4th year BSW placement with the John Howard Society of London and District. I was afforded various learning opportunities and felt empowered as a student. I was able to integrate theory into practice, strengthen my counselling skills, evaluate the effectiveness of interventions, create intervention plans, and develop a sense of self in practice. Working with individuals who have been impacted by the criminal justice system was a long-term goal of mine. I am grateful to have been part of an agency that supports and advocates for this population. My clinical supervisor, Kathleen Lowe, provided me with the space to reflect and learn as a student. She helped me become confident in my clinical skills and provided me with the necessary tools to succeed in my professional career as a social worker.

**Dana Shogan, 4th Year BSW Practicum Student, King's University College, School of Social Work, 2021**

I had the pleasure of being offered a 4th year BSW student placement at the John Howard Society of London and District. This placement opportunity allowed me to apply many of the concepts learned in classes into the real world of social work with the support and guidance of two wonderful placement supervisors. The staff at JHS London were encouraging and fostered an environment that

focused on helping me to learn and grow during my time there. JHS London's devoted employees work tirelessly to advocate and support marginalized individuals and I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to see this hard work and dedication firsthand.

**Shelby Douglas, 4th Year BSW Practicum Student, King's University College, School of Social Work, 2019**

My time at JHS was foundational in developing the skills I now rely on in my social work practice. The most important thing I learned is incredibly simple but possibly the most effective strategy I have used thus far – treating individuals humanely. The most important aspect of being humane is fostering an understanding of the complexity of societal oppression, and how multiple oppressions often interface to produce the “undesirable” social problems that many blame on individuals instead of structures. In direct practice, this means many things for me. It means viewing people as humans with unique and complex experiences, and not problems or statistics. These values are now the foundation of not only my social work practice, but the way I treat others in general and view the world.

**Elizabeth McArthur, BSW Practicum Student, Dalhousie University, School of Social Work, 2021**

I began my final Master of Social Work (MSW) placement with the John Howard Society of London and District in January 2022. I was thrilled to be in an environment where I could practice social work in-person among colleagues. I met with Kathleen Lowe and Tracey Gough, two of the Society's social workers, and immediately I knew that they had practice experience and clinical wisdom

to pass on. They also embraced me not only as a student, but as a unique individual. I appreciated their honesty and authenticity in the interview, which allowed me to feel comfortable and welcomed by the organization. I left that interview knowing this was where I would like to spend the next six months of my experiential learning. Being sure to prioritise my own well-being, which was a breath of fresh air for a graduate student working multiple jobs. I could truly go on about the immense impact all of these incredible workers and women had on my own personal and professional development. It is with immense pride and gratitude that I get to continue the next chapter of my career as a social worker with this organization.

**Britney Avery, MSW Practicum Student, King's University College, School of Social Work, 2022**

I started out as a student, anxious, loud, impulsive, passionate, quirky. The way the Society helped me feel welcome, and embraced my many qualities, both good and bad, touched my heart. My placement soon became my workplace, and my co-workers soon became family. There was always something special here, and I feel blessed to have worked with so many of you. The way we treat each other, the way we treat our people, the passion that I see around me. It is inspiring, and I will carry all this with me for the rest of my life. Thank you all for everything. With much love,

**Brian Webster, 4th Year BSW Practicum Student, King's University College, School of Social Work 2018 and employee.**





## ORANGE SHIRT DAY/NATIONAL DAY FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

In past years, the John Howard Society of London and District staff have acknowledged each September 30th, otherwise known as Orange Shirt Day, by engaging in discussion, sharing educational links, travelling as a group to the Indian Residential School sites and wearing orange. In the Spring of 2021, news of the Kamloops Indian Residential School findings spread across the land. A confirmation along with deep pain were felt by all; not only for the 215 children found that day but also to brace ourselves for subsequent explorations and discoveries. It was important to act on our own healing and learning.



On September 30th, 2021, the Indigenous Services Team hosted a staff gathering to share education on the Indian Residential School policies and their negative effects on Indigenous Nations of Turtle Island. The team shared personal intergenerational experiences, interviews with local survivors, song, food, and traditional medicines. Staff were in a safe space to shed a tear, comfort each other and walk away feeling supported. Most importantly, the event provided insight into the background of Indigenous peoples as well as an informed approach to clientele surviving deliberate acts of colonization. We will continue to honour the survivors and the children who did not make it home while working together towards reconciliation.

*Indigenous Services Team*



# john howard society

London & District

## PROGRAMS

## Counselling Program

CLIENTS 1148 INTERVIEWS 3180 COLLATERAL CONTACTS 4342 CASE CONFERENCES 841

Counselling is provided to individuals who are involved, or are at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system and their respective families. The John Howard Society of London and District offers short-and long-term counselling services. Counselling services are offered in-person, or remotely.

The length and frequency of the counselling sessions varies based on clients' needs and progress. Social workers engage the client in a therapeutic relationship to assess risk and needs and to develop an intervention plan. Clients are assisted in solving problems and developing new coping skills.

### Pierre's Story

*Pierre came to the Society to complete mandated counselling through the Navigating Relationships Program after a domestic assault charge. Upon completion of the program, Pierre asked to continue counselling. Pierre experienced verbal, emotional and physical abuse from his mother and father growing up. Pierre struggled with addiction issues and years of unresolved trauma that caused him to not understand why he behaved the way he did. Pierre was motivated to change for the better in hopes that he could be in a healthy relationship with his partner again. Throughout counselling, Pierre learned numerous grounding techniques to manage his anxiety and depression, gratitude journaling and was able to turn to spiritual relations as supports. Pierre worked through his addiction issues through ongoing counselling at the Society and has been sober for two months. Pierre and his partner are now both attending counselling at the Society to ensure their relationship remains positive.*



**United Way**  
Elgin Middlesex

## Community Education Program

VIRTUAL EVENTS 21 TOTAL AUDIENCE 410

The John Howard Society works closely with many community groups and coalitions to educate and involve more people in understanding the social justice issues affecting John Howard Society clients, providing information and workshops about the criminal justice system and its impact on society. The John Howard Society provides speakers to schools, churches, service clubs and community organizations.

## Institutional Visiting

The John Howard Society provides weekly visits to the Elgin-Middlesex Detention Centre (EMDC) to provide information, counselling, advocacy and support to assist individuals with reintegration planning. Incarcerated individuals may place a request with the guards on duty to see a worker from the John Howard Society. Referrals are accepted from any source, including family, friends, community members and an individual on the range. Collect calls are accepted from all provincial and federal institutions. Support letters can also be provided to assist individuals in planning for their release.



## Record Suspension

The John Howard Society assists individuals in completing applications for a suspension of their criminal record. The Society also offers information on travel waivers (a document that allows Canadians with a criminal record to travel to other countries). This service assists individuals in regaining confidence, finding employment and boosting their self-esteem.

### Testimonial

*"I began with seeking assistance in filing my application for a record suspension so that one day I might be able to apply for jobs that required a background check and soon found Courtney, a counsellor with the John Howard Society. The counsellor I was then directed to was informative and helped me stay focused on each of the parts of the application. We discussed the reasons for applying, the potential benefits, and the broader implications of a continued rehabilitative path in life. I appreciate the conversations that we had in this regard and appreciate her ability to keep me on task and organized."*

Record Suspension Client

## Children's Group

CHILDREN 28 GROUP SESSIONS 33

The Children's Group is a preventative after school program for children living in the Boullee, Huron, and Kipps Lane communities. The John Howard Society offers a group for girls and boys between the ages of 4 and 12 years in the Huron subsidized housing project. The group offers a safe place to go after school to engage in fun educational activities, eat snacks, build positive relationships and develop skills.



### Chelsea's Story

*Chelsea is a long-time member of the Children's Group and is always excited to come and participate. Chelsea leaned on the group facilitators and the children she already knew. Chelsea was not fond of playing with the other children that she did not know, or that were much younger than she was. She would tell her peers that they were not allowed to play with her and her friends. The group facilitators facilitated a "friendship day" where everyone made bracelets and talked about the qualities of a good friend. Chelsea started making bracelets for everyone and they in return made them for her. Chelsea started working with her peers to make specific bracelets based on their own taste. This opened conversations between peers that normally would not have occurred. Chelsea was able to broaden her friend group and create a more welcoming environment for the Children's Group.*

## Women's Group

PARTICIPANTS 52 GROUP SESSIONS 47

The John Howard Society of London and District offers a weekly support group for women who have a loved one involved in the criminal justice system. The group offers women an opportunity to receive support through emotional crises, evaluate their relationships and receive relevant information about the criminal justice system. The women share common experiences and emotions in a confidential and non-judgmental setting and develop new coping skills. Through involvement with the group, women build friendships with other women and feel less socially isolated.





## Boullee/Huron/Kipps Lane Project

The John Howard Society offers counselling, advocacy and referrals to other community agencies for youth and families who reside in the three subsidized housing communities. The Society's workers identify high risk behaviours and develop an effective intervention plan to ensure that youth are able to complete school successfully and graduate to an apprenticeship, college, university or employment. School-based counselling services are offered to youth attending Montcalm Secondary School. Referrals are received from multiple sources including self referral.



## County Youth Outreach Program

The Society's social workers receive referrals of high-risk youth from educators, parents, probation officers, police and other social agencies. In addressing high risk behaviours presented by teens, the social workers offer counselling in the context of the school, peers, family and community. The social workers attend secondary schools in Glencoe, Strathroy and Parkhill on a weekly basis. Youth and families from Lucan and other small communities are served through Medway Secondary School. The Society's social workers work collaboratively with other social service agencies based in the county to provide additional support to the youth and their families. Services are also available when school is not in session. During the summer and breaks, clients can be seen in the community.



## Teen's Group (Youth Empowerment Program)

PARTICIPANTS 16 GROUP SESSIONS 30

The Youth Empowerment Program is a group program offered in the Boullee, Huron and Kipps Lane communities. The group supports youth, aged 11-16 with career development, course selection, team work, critical thinking and creativity. The group teaches employment skills such as building a resume and success in interviews. Volunteering is encouraged. The group helps youth in understanding leadership through the exploration of team work, critical thinking, cultural diversity, creativity and more.



## London Youth Justice Hub/Centre

On June 1, 2021, the John Howard Society of London and District entered into a contractual agreement with the Canadian Mental Health Association - Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services for provision of Counselling Services and Anger Management Groups to eligible youth who access the London Youth Justice Hub/Centre. The goal of this agreement was to provide rapid access to counselling services to improve the overall well-being of youth who access the centre. The London Youth Justice Hub/Centre is a court diversion for youth with low-level charges. Justice centres move justice out of the traditional courtroom and into a community setting. The centre brings together justice, health, and social services to address the root causes of crime, break the cycle of offending, and improve community safety. Justice centres hold individuals accountable for their offences while connecting them to services such as health, mental health, addictions, housing, and employment supports that reduce the risk of re-offending.

### Jill's Story

*Jill was referred to counselling through the Justice Centre to address problematic relationship dynamics with her parents, and to learn tips to deal with her unhealthy overuse of electronics. Jill's overuse of electronics was a common point of tension between her parents and herself. She reported having a hard time focusing on her work, and would use electronics to distract herself, which further hampered her focus. Jill reported that, because of her electronic use, as well as other tensions, she was fighting with her parents most days, and sometimes the fights would get intense. She did not know how to express herself in a healthy way, so most communication led to arguments.*

*Through counselling, Jill learned that electronics can be addictive, and she was able to address her behaviour, understanding how this coping mechanism might not be the healthiest for her success. Jill also learned to understand her emotions and express them in an assertive way. These new skills led to improved communication with her parents, and ultimately more understanding between them. Jill learned new strategies in her counselling and how to implement these for improved life outcomes.*

## Breaking the Cycle of Post-Incarceration Homelessness(BTC)

Breaking the Cycle is a hotel-based intervention program and provides rapid stabilization for those experiencing post-incarceration homelessness and facilitates supports into safe and suitable accommodations. This program aims to support vulnerable individuals aged 18 years and over who are newly released from custody to avoid living unsheltered in London. The program provides intensive case management, reintegration support, mental health and addiction counselling, assistance with accessing basic needs and system navigation.



### Testimonial

To start, I want you to understand where I'm coming from. I would like you to imagine spending only one week away from home for any reason. When you return to your family after this week, you notice new food in the refrigerator, mention of conversations or incidents that occurred over the week, maybe even new clothing in your son's closet. Now imagine years away. Technology will have been upgraded, slang lingo will have changed, new political leaders will have taken office, friends will have moved away, new singers and movies will be topping the charts, and so on. It's a huge emotional difference to experience. For me serving a significant sentence, I had no choice but to turn prison into home. Upon my release, I not only had to deal with the changes the world made in my absence, but there was the guilt and shame of those I let down in my life. I also had the harsh reality of being set free to having nothing, no place to go, no one there, and no possessions of any kind. It was very overwhelming and there was a lot of pressure to not fall back into a reckless lifestyle. Not only was everything changed in the world, but now I had restrictions on me as well, so I wasn't as truly free as I thought. I was told I had set things to do, places to be, things to prove and places I couldn't go. But thankfully there is a help out there and people that understand the harsh impact of adjusting to new beginnings. I was lucky enough to have been able to talk to the John Howard Society and they were able to get me into a program called "Breaking the Cycle." Meeting with Courtney and Tracey was a blessing. These ladies went above and beyond their work duties to make sure my mental health was good, helped by providing food and shelter. They truly care, always helping out with anything they could.

I am grateful for the time I had with them, the adjustments they helped me get through and the opportunity to better myself. Tough times don't last but tough people do. If they were able to lead you in the right direction let them, I promise you won't be disappointed in the results.

Thanks again.

John (participant)



LONDON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

## Stratford Jail Institutional Visiting and Reintegration Program

CLIENTS 96 INTERVIEWS 234 COLLATERAL CONTACTS 276 CASE CONFERENCES 241

The John Howard Society of London and District provides regular visits at the Stratford Jail to provide information, counselling, advocacy and support to assist individuals with reintegration planning. Individuals are connected to community resources to access additional support. Follow-up is offered to facilitate the individual's successful reintegration into the community.



**United Way**  
Perth-Huron

*"The hardest part of doing time, is being stuck in your own mind. No one to rely on, no one to unload, and no one to guide me down this dark and lonely road. Struck out and caved in, picked over and forgotten, its gonna be a miracle if I don't get spit out all rotten. The years keep on turning, grinding, and churning, tortured by my memories, this insatiable burning. Day after day these thoughts cause me to question, was any of that real? Am I better off forgotten? A tough pill to swallow when truth cuts through lies. How unbelievably true that love truly is blind. Trust and faith systematically dismantled. Layer after layer, your life comes unraveled. Stripped to my foundation and shaken to the bone. My salvation is the knowledge... The best is yet to come." (participant)*

### Hope Kits:



The John Howard Society of London and District received funding from the United Way Perth-Huron over the last couple of years to create "Hope Kits" for individuals released from the Stratford Jail. These kits were created to assist individuals who were released from custody without any money in their pockets to purchase essential items such as food and hygiene products. The Hope Kits include the following items: face masks, hand sanitizer, hygiene products, healthy snacks, a Tim Hortons card for a coffee and a hot meal upon release, pen, note pad/planner, bus tickets, socks, hats, mitts, tote bag, community resources contact sheet and a gift card/voucher to purchase winter clothes for individuals released during the winter without proper attire. The Hope Kits have been extremely helpful for individuals who might be facing homelessness and trying to reintegrate into the community.

## Emergency Transportation:

In 2020, both United Way Perth-Huron and the John Howard Society saw firsthand the significant challenges of individuals released from the Stratford Jail with no means to return to their hometown. The lack of funds for transportation for individuals released from custody, who live out of the region, has created a huge gap in service in the community of Stratford. To eliminate this gap, the United Way Perth-Huron has generously provided the Society with funding to support emergency transportation for inmates released from custody who are in need of transportation to return to their hometown.



## Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program – Huron County

CLIENTS 48 GROUP / INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS 41



The PAR Program is a Domestic Violence Court initiative. It is a 12-session group intervention that provides participants with an opportunity to examine their beliefs and attitudes towards domestic violence and learn non-abusive ways of resolving conflict within a relationship.

The program also assists victims/partners by reducing their isolation and providing information that will help them to make informed decisions about their safety and their relationship.

## Testimonial

*The PAR Program has been a very positive program for me. Out of the many topics addressed, I would like to highlight three. One, "How Beliefs and Attitudes Affect Behaviours." I needed to be in control at all times to protect myself from further abuse. But what I really did was to isolate myself from other healing voices to speak into my life. Two, "Understanding Triggers/Warning Signs." Through the group and excellent facilitating of Mary and Greg, I was able to see a number of new triggers that have been affecting my relationships. Three, "Dealing with Conflict." I am learning that I cannot just jump into a conflict dialogue but I need to stand back and hear the pain of the conflict with my heart and not just with my head before I react. Even though I did not highlight the other topics, they were very helpful in my healing journey. The PAR Program is very blessed in having Mary and Greg facilitate this program. They have been a great blessing in my life. Thank you for letting me share.*

PAR Program participant

## Bail Verification and Supervision Program

CLIENTS 1169 INTERVIEWS 15845 COLLATERAL CONTACTS 9893  
CASE CONFERENCES 198



Ministry of the  
Attorney General

The program provides community supervision to eligible individuals who do not have the financial or social supports to meet bail requirements. Prospective clients are interviewed while in custody to determine eligibility. If release is approved by the court, clients report weekly, or more frequently, to have their conditions monitored. The program also provides enhanced supervision to support clients with mental health and substance use issues. The program offers specialized bail services for Indigenous people using a culturally appropriate approach to supervision.

The Bail Program is currently offered in the following jurisdictions: London, Woodstock, St. Thomas, Stratford, Goderich and Walkerton. Supervision is also available at the Chippewas of the Thames First Nation.

### Mary's Story

*Mary was accused of drug-related charges. Mary had struggled with substance use for the last 10 years. As a result, Mary had been diagnosed with a variety of both mental and physical health issues that were starting to influence her well-being and relationships with both her children, spouse, and family. Furthermore, these criminal allegations meant that her employment opportunities were also at risk. Mary knew that the road ahead was a long one, but with the assistance of the John Howard Society, Mary felt prepared and ready to take on this new challenge.*

*The moment Mary was released to the John Howard Society (JHS) under bail supervision, it was apparent that this reporting relationship was critical for Mary's development if she were to move beyond these charges and begin her life anew. For the next 15 months, Mary reported with her caseworker on a weekly basis, never missing a check-in. Mary was resilient and steadfast in the face of her addictions and the court. Mary attended counselling, worked with therapists, and engaged in a considerable amount of self-reflection allowing her to analyze the past in order to create a better future.*

*At the end of 15 months, Mary had completed her matters in court. Mary had started participating in a fitness program, had maintained employment, and was feeling fulfilled in the wake of surpassing her addiction and court allegations. Throughout this time, her bail supervisor provided referrals, made phone calls on her behalf, researched a number of opportunities available pertaining to employment and school, reminded Mary of her doctor appointments and established a wonderful rapport with Mary to make her feel welcomed.*

*Mary is now substance-free, living with her family and enjoying her life as a healthy woman, mother, and wife.*



## Indigenous Services Program

ADULTS 113 INTERVIEWS 752 COLLATERAL CONTACTS 1816 CASE CONFERENCES 129  
YOUTH 32 INTERVIEWS 1088 COLLATERAL CONTACTS 4567 CASE CONFERENCES 31

The John Howard Society of London and District is under contract with the Ministry of the Solicitor General and the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services to provide culturally relevant probation and parole supervision for Indigenous adults and youth. The Society employs Indigenous workers who supervise sentence orders for Indigenous youth and adults residing in London, Woodstock, St. Thomas and the three neighbouring communities: Oneida Nation of the Thames, Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, and Munsee-Delaware First Nation. The Indigenous Services workers incorporate traditional Indigenous approaches in their work with clients.

### Gina's Story

*Gina was sentenced to a youth probation order and was assigned to the Indigenous Services Program for her supervision. When her conditions were reviewed, Gina and her PO started to discuss the community service portion of her Order. Gina was told about the dreamcatcher option and she seemed interested. She asked how her probation officer would know how many hours she spent working on the dreamcatchers. Her PO told her they would use the trust principle. Gina's eyes began to fill with tears. Her PO gently asked her if she was ok, and Gina responded simply, "nobody has ever said they trust me before".*



## Gladue Court

In collaboration with the Court and other community agencies and organizations, the John Howard Society supported the development of a Gladue Court in London which focuses on the unique needs of Indigenous offenders. One of the Society's Indigenous Services Program workers attends the Court on a regular basis.

## Community Maintenance Program/Sex Offender (CMP-SO)

CLIENTS 20 GROUP / INDIVIDUAL SESSIONS 172 COLLATERAL CONTACTS / CASE CONFERENCES 169

The CMP-SO program is an extension of the Integrated Correctional Program Model (ICPM). The CMP-Sex Offender Program targets men who have been assessed as having a risk of reoffending sexually. The program consists of 12 group sessions as well as individual sessions.

Each group session is two hours long. The program is designed to teach participants the skills required to reduce risky sexual and harmful behaviours. It also helps participants address their attitudes and beliefs using cognitive behavioural skills. Participants are able to reconsider ways to manage behaviours and develop interpersonal, communication and coping skills.



## Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP)

CLIENTS 14 INTERVIEWS 750 COLLATERAL CONTACTS 325 CASE CONFERENCES 997

The John Howard Society of London and District has collaborated with the City of Stratford Social Services Department, Choices for Change, Optimism Place Women's Shelter and Support Services and Stratford/Perth Shelterlink to offer the Supported Housing of Perth Program (SHOPP). The program is a highly collaborative Housing First program serving the City of Stratford, Perth County, and St. Mary's. The program provides housing assistance and wraparound support services to people who are experiencing homelessness.

The program assists participants with housing stability and social inclusion, and offers mobile intensive case management services, portable housing allowances and other supports as necessary.



## Direct Accountability Program

PARTICIPANTS 131 GROUP SESSIONS 69 COLLATERAL CONTACTS / CASE CONFERENCES 268



Ministry of the  
Attorney General

The Direct Accountability Program is an alternative to prosecution for eligible individuals over the age of 18 who have been charged with minor criminal offences. The program involves accused persons being held accountable through community-based sanctions. The four programs held at the John Howard Society are the Stop Shop Theft Program, Alcohol and Drug Awareness Program, Anger and Substance Awareness Program and Anger Management Program. Individuals referred to those programs have been assessed to benefit from an opportunity to address the problematic thinking, feelings and behaviours that led to their involvement with the criminal justice system.



## Community Case Management and Supervision (CCMS) Program



Canada Border  
Services Agency

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) implemented a national Community Case Management and Supervision (CCMS) program, in partnership with the John Howard Society of Canada, to provide an alternative to detention for those who would otherwise be detained in custody awaiting the resolution of their immigration issues. The John Howard Society offices across the country are participating in this national program. The John Howard Society of London and District is one of the affiliates in Ontario that established the CCMS program last year. The program offers intensive community supervision and case management services to eligible individuals so they can be safely supported and supervised in the community.

## Milestone Service Award

Our success as an organization is due largely to the hard work of our amazing staff members who meet the intense challenges of the day-to-day work. We truly appreciate your hard work and commitment to the work of the John Howard Society of London and District.

As such, the Society has established the Milestone Service Award in order to recognize our staff members for their dedication and years of service to the agency. The agency recognizes staff for each five years of continuous service. At each milestone, our employees receive a certificate of service and an award gift.

This year, two exceptional staff members are being recognized!

**Jovana Lojpur for 5 years of service**  
**Charlene Beatty for 5 years of service**

Thank you for the loyalty and dedication you have brought to the organization over the years. Thank you for your hard work, devotion and commitment and for going above and beyond every day to assist the most vulnerable client populations in our community.

Congratulations!



## OUR FUNDERS



**United Way**  
Elgin Middlesex



**United Way**  
Perth-Huron



**Canada Border  
Services Agency**



**Ministry of the  
Attorney General**



**Ministry of  
Children, Community &  
Social Services**



**Ministry of the  
Solicitor General**



**LONDON  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**



**STRATFORD PERTH  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION**

**Ontario  
Trillium  
Foundation**



**Fondation  
Trillium  
de l'Ontario**

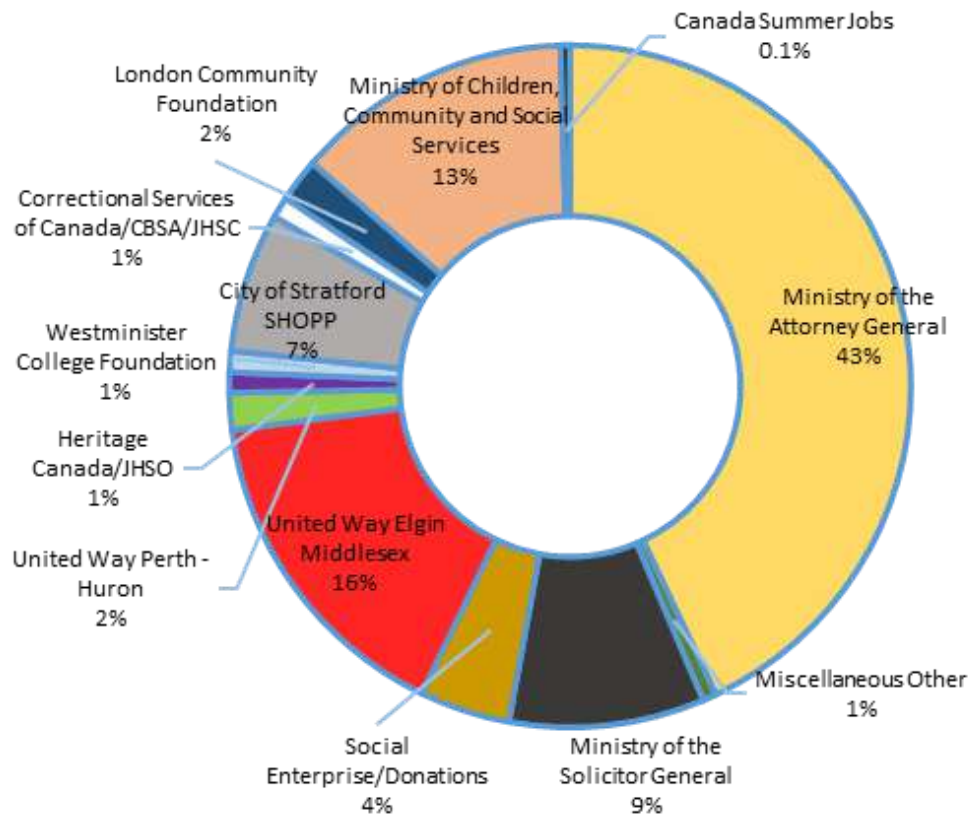




## Financial Report

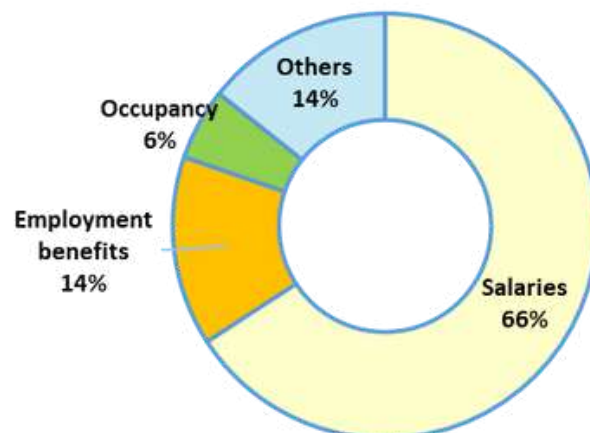
### REVENUE

**\$1,994,617**



### EXPENSES

**\$1,880,195**



## United Way CAMPAIGN 2021

The John Howard Society of London and District has been a community partner of the United Way Elgin Middlesex since 1953 and the United Way Perth-Huron since 2009. The Society is able to achieve its Mission each year due to the ongoing financial support of the United Way.

The 2021 United Way Campaign was the second campaign to be run during the COVID-19 Pandemic. We brought back a few of the more popular COVID events from the previous campaign, including Halloween Mask Decorating, and introduced some new virtual events, like the Virtual Trivia Night. We “Kicked Off” the campaign in September with a Zoom lunch to launch the campaign and introduce the agency to the campaign events. Staff again participated in the United Way’s Annual Stair Climb by creating an agency specific event of a guided hike through Kilally Meadows. The Society created calendars where every weekday in November we held a draw. Staff and volunteers provided generous prizes and many community businesses contributed as well! The calendars were very successful and continue to be one of the bigger events of the Society’s campaign. One of our campaign coordinators also began a three-year campaign event to hike the Bruce Trail to raise money for United Way.

Without the participation of the Board of Directors, staff and volunteers, our campaign’s success would not have been possible. We appreciate everyone’s continued effort, especially with the financial commitment. We would like to announce that we raised a total of **\$8549** for the United Way Elgin Middlesex and **\$670** for the United Way Perth-Huron.

Total funds raised for the 2021 Campaign were **\$9219**.

Thank you to our campaign team!



## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2020/2021



Mrs. Paula Osmok, Retired Chief Executive Officer of the John Howard Society of Ontario (JHSO), was our speaker last year. Paula provided an excellent speech about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on programs and services across JHS affiliates; how JHS affiliates were able to deal with the global pandemic; and what the future looks like. Paula also talked about the Equity Committee that JHSO established last year.

Paula retired in June 2022 as the CEO of the JHSO, a position she has held since 2002. During this time, she established the Centre of Research and Policy at JHSO, and the growing team of research, policy and evaluation staff have engaged in leading edge research and through leadership, made significant

contributions to social and criminal justice literature and program development in Ontario. Prior to accepting the leadership role at JHSO, she held the position of Executive Director for the John Howard Society Simcoe & Muskoka. In that role, she developed and implemented a range of community-based services, including programming for both provincial and federal prisoners. She served on many boards and working committees throughout her career such as the Adult Justice Advisory Committee and currently serves on the Ontario Human Rights Commission Advisory Committee. Paula holds a MSc. in Criminal Justice Studies from the University of Leicester in the UK.

We would like to express our appreciation to Paula Osmok, for her strong leadership, vision, and dedication to the John Howard Society. We wish Paula all the best in retirement. She will be missed by many!

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2022 - GUEST SPEAKER

Christin Cullen was recently appointed to the position of Chief Executive Officer at John Howard Society of Ontario in July of 2022.

Christin previously served as Executive Director of John Howard Society of York Region for 12 years. As an active member of the JHS Executive Directors Committee, she chaired several committees and strongly supported collaborative activities and initiatives. Christin holds a BA (Hon) in Criminal Justice and Public Policy from The University of Guelph and a Master of Laws in Criminal Law and Procedure from Osgoode Hall Law School at York University.



# STAFF





# STAFF







## HISTORY IN PICTURES







## HISTORY IN PICTURES







## HISTORY IN PICTURES













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