

# THE ANAWIM NEWS

T H E A N A W I M C O M P A N I O N S S O C I E T Y



*Terry Edison-Brown, House Director (c) bids a tearful farewell to Lynne & Len Lavigne*

**T**hey came to Anawim to help out for a month and ended up staying 21 years! As we bid them a sad farewell, we also reflect on the story of how they came to Anawim and the impact they have had on our own story.

The Lavignes moved to Victoria in the early nineties with plans to begin a new career. Len trained as a chef, and together, they started a catering business. One day, they heard Larry Pazder, a founding member of Anawim, speaking about the plight of the poor and how Anawim offered a way for people living on the streets to find themselves and start living a healthier life.

Len and Lynne heard the message, and in 1992 they started to donate leftover food from their catering engagements to Anawim. Soon, Lynne and Len started to volunteer as much as they could because they believed that with love and compassion people could heal themselves.

In January 1994, they were approached by Michelle Pazder, then house director, who asked if they could help out for a month. And that one month lasted until May 2015. They never looked back. As Anawim was growing, so were Lynne and Len—our society grew up around them! They were never trained for this line of work, but with their faith in God and their belief in Anawim's mission, they worked diligently with the poor to help empower thousands of people to embrace their lives.

We are writing this a month after their retirement, and although we are very happy for them, the house is not the same without them. It is hard to put into words the impact they have had on Anawim and the special place they hold in the Anawim family. Since they've gone, it feels like a part of Anawim is missing. But just as families come to terms with loved ones who move away, Anawim will grow on, and the legacy of Lynne and Len will be with us always.

On behalf of all the residents, drop-in guests, volunteers, staff and board members—past and present—we extend our deepest gratitude to Lynne and Len for their 21 years of service to the Anawim (God's precious poor). They have shaped what Anawim House is today, and have changed more lives than they can ever know.

Thank you, Lynne and Len! We love you and we will miss you.

**N**o one could ever take the place of Lynne and Len in Anawim's story. And while it is with sad hearts that we say goodbye, we are happy to welcome Rob Hurst, Anawim's new house-manager.

Rob brings to Anawim many years of experience in the helping professions, working in settings as diverse as a 200 bed shelter in Ohio, a detention facility in South Carolina, and orphanages in China, where Rob and his wife also worked as teachers for seven years. He has worked with youth and new immigrants in Courtenay and Campbell River, and as a volunteer in Asia and Africa. Rob is very familiar with the people whom Anawim serves, having volunteered with shelters on Vancouver Island and elsewhere. He has worked as a peer counsellor, a workshop organizer, and career counsellor, experiences that

will be especially valuable in his work at Anawim.

Rob has spent his first months at Anawim getting to know the residents and guests and finding his place in the Anawim family. He describes himself as "super-excited" about his new role as house manager, and is grateful for the warm welcome he has received from everyone. Looking ahead, he describes Anawim as "exploding with talent, potential, and love."

Rob has set his sights on developing more day programs for Anawim's new learning centre, located in the upstairs area of the house. Among his plans are workshops in computers, literacy skills, art therapy, and employment skills, as well as support groups for women and for other specific needs.



*Rob Hurst  
Anawim House - Manager*

Rob is looking forward to getting to know the

residents and guests on a one-to-one basis. "It is my passion to see hope in people's eyes and for people to realize their full potential," Rob says. "Anawim's potential, like the people who come here, is endless."



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**Homelessness • Addiction  
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# A COMMUNITY BUILDS A FENCE

The final screws were turned on June 18th, bringing to a close a two-month journey that was made possible by the support of various businesses, community groups and residents in the North Park neighborhood.



*Project Leader, Anawim Board Member Jim Ross, installs the canopy on the new Rain Shelter*

The project - to replace the dilapidated fence that surrounded Anawim House - was a special one for coordinator, Jim Ross. He managed the build with help from upwards of 70 volunteers, many of whom were Anawim residents and Drop-In Guests.

Upwards of 30 people were on hand for the celebratory turning of the final screw, after which the crowd raised bottles of water as a toast to a successful effort.



*Final Screws: Rob Conrod - Sherwin Williams, Daniel Wallace - Anawim & Alex Spence - Guest*

Terry Edison-Brown, House Director, helped build the original fence in 1994. He remarked on how the come-one, come-all construction of the fence was symbolic of the house as a whole. "Everyone is required to pull their weight at Anawim. The concept is not to 'do for' but to 'work with'", Edison-Brown said.



*Sunny demolishes the original fence...*



*Jim, Peter & Roy contemplate the next move*



*Jacob and Scott joined over 40 other people who joined in to help at the Anawim Paint-In*



*Glad Tidings Church & Project Serve were a huge help in preparing the yard for the new fence*



*Daniel sanding the rough edges off the fence posts*



*Terry & Yuris filling the post holes with cement*

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*...and as Vince says: "It has to be fun!" IT WAS!*

with files from Mike Devlin  
Photos by Dan Wallace & Adrian Lam



## PROFILES IN RECOVERY - "JAMES"



*James - Anawim Drop-In Guest*

I am 62 years old and have a BA from Queen's University and I grew up in a normal family environment. I am also emotionally drained, living in constant fear, and homeless.

Eight years ago I was divorced, financially compromised and suddenly holding on by a very thin thread. Two years later, after my savings ran out, I moved in with my 85 year old parents and have spent the last 5 years taking care of them. Eventually they required more care than I could provide, and their

relocation and accommodation left me without a place to live.

I decided to move to Victoria to look for work. I was born on Vancouver Island and had spent many summers of my youth at my grandmother's house in Victoria.

Lately I've been living in a tent in Beacon Hill Park, sleeping in fields of tall grass or staying intermittently in a shelter in Rock Bay.

For the last two months I've been visiting Anawim House almost every day. There I can get a breakfast of fresh fruits, cereals and breads, as well as soup and sandwich for lunch. It's a remarkable environment to be part of. A place where the Anawim residents, guests, staff and volunteers make the meals together and eat the meals together.

The staff at Anawim are professional, knowledgeable, supportive, kind and just plain nice to be around. They also have a great deal of information about subsidized housing and shelter options.

If it weren't for Anawim, life would be considerably more difficult for me and others like me. We rely not only on the

food that is provided, but also on the companionship, the laundry services, the showers and the clothing room. I love being at Anawim for the opportunity to help prepare meals for other guests and to help clean up after each meal. It makes me feel part of the bigger Anawim picture.

In my former life I had the privilege of visiting and living in several foreign countries. I found that in Asia, most of the support for individuals comes from extended family members and it's normal for multiple generations to live under the same roof. In Africa the supports came from neighbours, outside church groups, the community and from complete strangers.

In Canada, it seems to be a blend of those two models, and Anawim's generous donors would seem to reflect that. It took me a long time to finally realize what my mother had tried to teach me my whole life - "a faith in a higher power and serving others is infinitely more important than serving oneself." Each day that I come to Anawim to serve or to be served, I am reminded of the truth of her words.

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**E-Mail: [info@anawimhouse.com](mailto:info@anawimhouse.com)**  
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**[www.anawimhouse.com](http://www.anawimhouse.com)**

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## ANAWIM &amp; THE HARBOURCATS

Anawim has always been proud of its connection to the community & this year we were pleased to partner with the Victoria HarbourCats in bringing awareness to the work that Anawim does and the overall issue of



homelessness and poverty in our city. The HarbourCats have regularly featured Anawim on the big scoreboard in front of thousands of fans. In return, our residents, guests and staff have volun-

teered their time to prepare the ball field before, during and after the games. The "Clean Start Crew" has had a lot of fun participating at the games and has enjoyed its work on behalf of Anawim.

June 20th was Sock Toss Saturday - a benefit to support us and our clients. MacGregor Socks donated 1000's of pairs of socks which were then purchased by HarbourCats fans. The socks for the homeless were thrown on the field in celebration of the first home-run hit.

Anawim's staff, residents and members of the board were on-hand to collect all



*Harvey the HarbourCat with Mark Lemay, Rob Hurst & Hillary Marks on Sock-Toss Saturday*

the socks from the field for those-in-need. All cash proceeds from the sock sales were also donated to Anawim.

All of us at Anawim would like to thank the HarbourCats & especially their GM, Jim Swanson, for their support, the great exposure, the compassion and the all of the good times this summer.



*Drop-In Guest, Brandy Mattu - Anawim's Clean-Start Crew chief.*

Anawim is grateful for the support from 1000's of individual & corporate donors. We couldn't do it without you!

Anawim Companions Society - Empowering the Homeless since 1991

Anawim Companions Society  
973 Caledonia Ave.  
Victoria, BC V8T 1E7

