

Thursday, June-25-15



U-Turn Drop-in Center
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Good afternoon friends, I use the word friends because, I feel we are not strangers, Just friends we haven't meet yet.

My name is Jeff, and I am a recovering Alcoholic, Addict and also suffer with depression. Through lived experience I now have a passion for Mental Health and Addictions.

My wife Tammy and I is both non-paid volunteer Coordinators at the U-Turn Drop-In-Centre located in Carbonear, NL.

After sitting at the round table discussion at the all-party Mental Health and Addictions committee meeting a couple of weeks back. Tammy and I have requested to attend the Public Presentation session to educate you about our services and to discuss U-Turn's future. As we talk about U-Turn, its services, what it has to offer, what an asset in the community it is and how it saves Government money you will be shocked to learn that to date U-turn has been under the operation of two volunteer coordinators. The centre has come to a point that it's essential a fulltime paid coordinator is needed in order for U-Turn to meet the demand and need of the clients we serve. we are looking forward to your support in make this possible.

First of all:

U-Turn is a non-profit organization committed to helping individuals through the process of addiction recovery and supporting family members who are affected by addiction. U-Turn had its grand opening on July 17, 2011.

U-Turn's motto: "No matter how far down the road your addiction has taken you, you can always make a U-Turn and come back."

Vision: Helping people live beyond addiction.

Mission: To bring experience, strength, and hope to people who seek recovery from addiction.

Values: Respect, Compassion, Integrity

U-Turn provides a supportive, safe environment for all visitors to our drop-in centre, make referrals to professional services, support individuals and families in need due to addiction issues, provide information and educational resources, and provide the opportunity for fun, safe and clean activities, that support an addiction-free lifestyle. In the last 12 months our centre had 4105 drop-ins, with the average of 15-20 new people *per month*. These drop-ins include Addiction, Support, Volunteers, 12 step recovery meetings and extra activities.

U-Turn is open five days a week for people to drop by and spend time in a clean and safe environment. They meet others with addictions that are making life changes and, they can talk with Tammy or me. Tammy and myself are pretty much available 24/7 to the recovering addict. The centre has:

- (1) Five weekly 12 step recovery meetings.
- (2) Recovery workshops and presentations
- (3) Clean and sober outings.
- (4) Supported people in finding affordable housing. We have also gathered furniture; clothing and other items to help people in need get a fresh start.
- (5) When requested, we support people in recovery as they make their way through the court system.
- (6) Offer transportation to the Recovery Centre or a Methadone Doctor's appointment in St. John's when needed.

You may be asking yourself, is addiction is an issue in our communities? The answer is certainly "yes!" Eastern Health Research Scientists have demonstrated that drug use in Conception Bay North, like most areas of our province, is a major issue. The disease of addiction can affect all types of people from all types of backgrounds. Someone struggling with an addiction might be a family member, neighbour, a professional, or the person serving you at the store. What we have observed is that most people we talk to with a drug addiction and are under the age twenty five have used drugs intravenously. We have come across cases where people are homeless, living in cars, living in small mobile campers with no electricity or propane, not having personal care items or proper facilities to get a wash, no access to laundry facilities and not having food to eat. Yes, my friends, this is happening here in our small towns. And it is not just limited to people in their twenties. People from all walks of life and social economic status have come through our doors. From the addict benefiting from the big money of Alberta to the senior addicted to prescription drugs, we have seen it all. Let's face it – ignoring addiction and turning a blind eye to the problems associated with it, won't make it go away. People have said that at U-Turn, "lives have been changed" and some have gone as far as to say "lives have been saved."

Here are some of the things happening at the U-Turn Centre that we suggest, can save the government, local businesses and taxpayers money.

- (1) Clients using the centre no longer require hospitalization due to their mental health and addictions issues.
- (2) Clients have regained custody of their children from Child Youth and Family Services
- (3) Clients who get their addiction under control no longer turn to crime to feed an out-of-control addiction. Examples; shoplifting, drug trafficking, driving with suspended license, etc.
- (4) Clients have gone back to school. Some of who have completed trades and are now in the workforce.
- (5) Reduction of injection drug use, which protects the person in recovery from developing health issues and reduces the number of used needles being discarded around our community, which in-turn protects everyone.
- (6) As a result of the U-Turn Centre and 12 step meetings, a number of members have decided not to take part in the methadone program. This in itself is a major cost saver. This alone has saved the government hundreds of thousands of dollars pre year.

When people came to the end of the road with their addiction and want to change, U-Turn has been a place to go to make that first step towards recovery.

If you have any questions on the need for the U-Turn Drop-In-Centre being an assist in our surrounding communities and is in the position to hire a full time coordinator. On behalf of myself, Tammy, the board of directors, those who use the centre, and the still suffering addict, I would like to thank you for listening.

Take care, God bless and have a great day.

Yours respectfully,

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