



FINDING THE RIGHT PLACE TO MOVE FORWARD

Recovery doesn't end when treatment does. With your support, Johnson Manor is giving men like Ian the substance-free home they need to continue their journey forward.

"I was waiting for the right place at the right time and the right opportunity to move forward," Ian Cooper says.

For many people in early recovery, that opportunity is hard to find.

"When you're in treatment, you're in a bubble. Recovery really starts when you hit the outside world again. But we're sending people back out to fend for themselves with no place to go, no job, no one to count on."

He pauses, looking around his room on the top floor of Johnson Manor, Cool Aid's new recovery house. *"Thank God for places like this."*

Ian was the first to apply, and the first to move in on April 7th. Since then, 19 other men have joined him to continue their recovery journey.

"They're my brothers. We're in this together," he says.



"I THOUGHT IT WAS HOPELESS"

Just a few years ago, Ian's life looked very different. *"Everything was chaos and destruction. At the time, I thought it was hopeless."*

Thankfully, he found his way to New Roads Therapeutic Recovery Community, where he spent 15 months healing. *"New Roads saved my life," he says.*

But recovery doesn't end when treatment does. When it came time for his next step, Ian knew he needed ongoing support and a safe place to land. That's when he found Cool Aid's Johnson Manor.

"IT GIVES ME PURPOSE"

Evan James, Cool Aid's Recovery House Manager, saw something in Ian—a steady resolve to move forward, and to give back.

"I was offered the role of House Lead," Ian shares. "It's a huge honour, but also a huge responsibility."

Ian takes that responsibility very seriously, going the extra mile to guide and support the other men in the house, from checking in on their goals, to simply listening.

"It gives me purpose. So I'm putting all my effort into it," he shares.



YOU'RE OPENING DOORS TO WHAT COMES NEXT



As I sit down to write this, Ian Cooper's words are on my mind: *"I was waiting for the right place at the right time and the right opportunity to move forward."*

Every day, Cool Aid connects people with life-changing opportunities like these. Moments and actions that may seem small but that fill people

with hope, and give them the strength and encouragement they need to transform their lives.

Whether it's opening the doors to Johnson Manor, giving men like Ian a safe, supportive place to carry on their recovery, or helping neighbours like Kayla find purpose and a path forward through meaningful work.

Together, their stories reflect something important: meaningful change is built together and even the smallest actions can be impactful. It takes supporters who see and believe in every person's potential. It takes breaking down barriers and bridging gaps that hold people back. And it takes a community that believes in and shows up for one another.

I'm deeply grateful to be a part of just such a community. I've been especially moved by how you've come together to honour the legacy of Kevin O'Cain, and carry on his commitment to changing lives. I encourage you to read more about Kevin, his parents' incredible act of generosity in his memory, and how you can make this work a part of your own legacy.

This spring, *thank you* for creating opportunities, restoring hope, and changing lives.

With gratitude,

Waheeda Esmail
Interim CEO

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That sense of purpose and structure is a key part of recovery, and every resident has a role to play, from cooking dinner to daily chores. They also participate in regular recovery meetings, and contribute to the community through paid or volunteer work.

YOU'RE HELPING IAN MOVE FORWARD

When Ian thinks about the future, his children are his biggest motivation.

"If I hadn't changed my life around, I don't know if I'd still have a family," he shares. *"Now, I can support them and be present in their lives."*

Ian is tremendously grateful. He is also keenly aware that

there are many others waiting for a similar opportunity.

"If there were four Johnson Manors, they would all be full," he shares.

"Because of this place, there are 20 guys here who are now going to be able to go out and help society. If it wasn't for this, I wouldn't have been able to better my life, and my children's lives. Thank you." ●

IT'S ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

Through your generous support of our Labour Pool, you're helping people feel valued, find purpose, and forge a brighter future.

A job can change everything. Not long ago, Kayla was living in a tent with her partner. Her future felt very uncertain.

Today, she has a growing list of regular cleaning clients, and her family has found a stable home of their own. It all began when she was connected with Cool Aid's Labour Pool.

"It can really turn somebody's life around," shares Wendy Stone, the program's coordinator. And that's in no small part thanks to caring people like you.

"IT'S NOT JUST A JOB"

The Labour Pool connects people with casual paid jobs, like gardening, moving, painting, and office help, while meeting them where they're at.

Wendy works one-on-one with each participant, getting to know their skills, goals, and challenges—whether that's not having ID, a phone, or an address. Together, they work to find solutions, and the right job fit.

"It's not just a job," Wendy shares. *"Certainly, it helps to have some money in your pocket, but it's more than that. It builds confidence and self-worth, and helps people feel like part of their community."*

YOU'RE HELPING MEET A GROWING NEED

The need for the program is growing alongside the rising cost of living, and it isn't just unhoused neighbours now in search of work. More seniors and others are turning to the Labour Pool to help make ends meet.

"There are more people looking for work than there are jobs," Wendy says. *"It's a real challenge. But we're here to help."*

And when opportunity comes, it can change everything. Randy is living proof.

For years, Randy had struggled to stay housed. Then, the Labour Pool team connected him with a wage subsidy program that eventually translated into full-time work. Today, he's an apprentice, and a proud parent. He recently stopped by the office on his baby's first birthday, eager to share how far he's come.

"His life has done a complete 180 degrees," Wendy says proudly.

"YOU'RE HELPING PEOPLE FEEL VALUED"

Wendy is tremendously grateful for the community's support. "Thank you. You're



creating opportunities for dignity, purpose, and connection. You're helping people feel valued."

If you need help with projects around your home or general office work, you can contact Wendy at wstone@coolaid.org. Or help someone get back on their feet through a financial donation designated to the Labour Pool program. ●

KEVIN'S LIFE-CHANGING LEGACY



Kevin O'Cain believed deeply in people.

As a frontline worker at Cool Aid, he met people where they were—with dignity, respect, and a steady, gentle presence that made them feel truly seen and safe. When Kevin passed away in 2003 after

a courageous battle with melanoma, our community lost someone irreplaceable. But the difference he made lives on.

Last fall, Kevin's parents, Michael and Judith O'Cain, chose to honour their son's memory in an extraordinary way. The O'Cains made a generous matching gift to Cool Aid—doubling every dollar donated in Kevin's memory—and our community answered with open hearts. Together, you raised an incredible \$1,000,000 for the people Kevin cared for so deeply.

Because of this outpouring of love, neighbours in our

community will receive the support, dignity, and care that Kevin exemplified.

Michael and Judith's gift is more than a donation. It is a legacy—a permanent reminder that one life, lived with compassion, can ripple forward in ways we may never fully see.

Are you inspired by Kevin's story? A gift to Cool Aid—of any size, at any time—carries on the work of people like Kevin. And if you've ever considered leaving a legacy gift, we'd love to talk. Your generosity could change lives long after you're gone. ●

YOU CAN MAKE THE DIFFERENCE OF A LIFETIME

A gift in your will is one of the most meaningful ways for your compassion to live on. Here are just a few reasons to consider a legacy gift.

ONE SIMPLE STEP CAN LIGHT THE PATH FORWARD

It's simple to include Cool Aid in your will, or add a gift to your existing will through a codicil amendment. And you can change your will at any time if your circumstances change.

TAKE CARE OF YOUR FAMILY AND YOUR COMMUNITY

Legacy gifts offer significant financial benefits by reducing the taxes owed by your estate. That means you are taking care of your family and the causes that matter most to you.

YOUR GREATEST GIFT IS STILL AHEAD

You've spent your life caring about people. A gift in your will is the chance to make that care last forever—turning what you've built into a lasting investment in your community.

To make The Victoria Cool Aid Society part of your legacy, please contact Alyson Dahl, Director of Philanthropy and Community Engagement, at adahl@coolaid.org or (250) 414-4799.