



# GOODSHEPHERD JOURNAL

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When I first came into recovery,  
I hated myself and hated my life.

Since I found my sobriety, I've  
learned to love myself and love  
my life. No drug can take that  
away from me.

Keenan Wagner  
DARE graduate



My first time using drugs, I was nine years old. My mom introduced me to drugs. When I was 14, it became a problem even though I was only using pot. I dropped out of high school. I started drinking a lot.

By the time I turned 18, I was fully addicted to crystal meth. By the time I was 21, my Nana's death led to me using fentanyl and needles and my life went really downhill. I wanted to die to be with my Nana.

It wasn't until December 2, 2020, that I decided to make a change in my life.

**Read on to find out how your donations helped  
22-year-old Keenan Wagner turn his life around.**

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I looked at all the time and energy that I put into getting drugs – I stole scrap metal, I dug through dumpsters.

I thought, “If I took all this time and energy, I could do something with my life.” I was on the streets in Brantford. I called Hamilton detox and I went there.

When I was in detox, there was a wall with brochures, and there was one crumpled up brochure. I was curious. I opened it up. It was for the DARE Program.

I called DARE. Literally a day before I was going to get discharged from detox, DARE called and said they had a bed. Without DARE, I would have gone back to a shelter or the streets in Brantford to wait for treatment and I would have relapsed.

So when I first got here I was surprised because I was used to homeless shelters where I was in a dorm with 24 beds. I was glad to see I didn’t have to share my space. The staff and other guys in DARE were welcoming, the food was excellent, and I thought “This is where I need to be!”

I realized that if I wanted to love myself and my life, I needed to be sober. I learned that I like to volunteer and help other people. Helping around Good Shepherd Centre made me feel like I was making a contribution to people who were homeless like me.

I learned how to stay sober and have structure in my life. I never had that before. I watched my parents use drugs and alcohol to cope with their emotions and I thought that was how everyone coped with their emotions. Being here taught me how to start living a normal life.

I was supposed to go to treatment in Simcoe. When they called and said they had a bed, they said that due to COVID, I would be staying in a hotel and travelling to treatment each day. There would be no support staff in the hotel, but there was a bar.

I told one of the DARE workers and he said “No!” He suggested another treatment centre, the place he graduated from. I waited another three and a half months. When I got there, it really helped.

I’ve learned that it’s okay to feel emotions – the only bad thing is when you let emotions get the best of you. I don’t have to avoid emotions, I just have to feel them and ride them out. At the end of the day, even the most painful emotion will pass.

When I was using drugs, the emotions went away while I was using, but they’d come back worse than ever afterwards. Using drugs just prolongs difficult emotions.

I came back to DARE after treatment. I’m going to transitional housing that supports recovery – I am lucky, I only had to wait a week.

I’ve been studying with a tutor. My goal is to become an addictions counsellor. It makes me happy to see people in recovery, making progress and transforming their lives.

I truly believe the Good Shepherd is a miracle for people who struggle with any sort of homelessness, mental health, poverty – anyone who struggles and needs a helping hand.

Good Shepherd helps thousands of people and it’s just beautiful – a beautiful thing to see. I’m very grateful to have seen it and experienced it.

Thanks to your gifts, Good Shepherd’s DARE (Drug & Alcohol Recovery Enrichment) Program helps homeless men as they work to stay in recovery from addictions. The 25 DARE beds serve more than 250 homeless men each year, with four DARE co-workers providing guidance and support to DARE clients.



BROTHER DAVID

## It's all thanks to YOU!

There's an Irish saying that goes: When I count my blessings, I count you twice.


And since you count as a double blessing, I want to thank you more than once. I want you to know how big a difference your support makes to people living under the crushing burdens of poverty and illness.

So I am sharing with you two notes of thanks, reviews posted on-line by people who received the services your generosity helps to make possible.

I am sharing these notes because it is YOUR compassion that builds and sustains "a place where LoVe is Home."

Your kindness brings the love of Jesus the Good Shepherd to people in desperate need. Your support helps to ease heavy burdens. You bring care and comfort to the suffering.


You make the world a better place, and I give thanks for you and your support each & every day. A blessed and happy Thanksgiving to you!




**Douglas Tyrrell**  
8 reviews

★★★★★ 2 weeks ago NEW

Just the best staff and management. The world would be a better place if people cared like they do. Love them all.


← Reply  1



**Jehnesis Fhelipe**  
Local Guide · 10 reviews

★★★★★ 6 months ago

There is a place where LoVe is Home.

← Reply  Like



Michael, Resident of St. Joe's

During the pandemic no resident was infected with Covid-19, with the praise going 100% to co-workers for maintaining strict infection control protocols.

According to one resident, "It is hard to go through a pandemic, it is hard not going outside during the lock down, but we feel like staff care about us and it is worth it in the end."

In celebration of full vaccination, residents of both homes came together for a BBQ and outdoor games. The residents dined on ribs, burgers, fries, and desserts. They played games for prizes and in the true Good Shepherd spirit everyone won a prize!

**Your ongoing donations help to make it possible for 14 frail individuals to live with dignity and support in a home-like setting. Thank you!**

## Your support keeps vulnerable people safe

Update on Barrett House & St. Joseph's Residence by Zaria Duncan, Manager of Residential and Client Support

All 14 residents of Barrett House (for people living with HIV & AIDS) and St. Joseph's Residence (frail seniors with a history of homelessness) have been fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

### PROMOTE Health PROMOTE Dignity with a donation of

- Toothpaste
- Toothbrushes
- Deodorant
- Bar soap
- Shampoo
- Disposable razors
- Shaving cream
- Vitamin C
- Multi-vitamins
- Advil/Tylenol/Aspirin
- Men's winter boots
- Men's winter coats
- Men's gloves
- Men's scarves
- Men's toques
- Men's socks (new)
- Men's underwear (new)



# THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE

You can drop off food donations at 412 Queen Street East, Toronto. Please leave a message on the Food Drive line [416.869.3619 x 229] to arrange a pick up for large donations.

Canned soups & stews  
Canned legumes, e.g. chick peas, black beans, lentils  
Pasta sauce & canned tomatoes  
Canned vegetables  
Tuna  
Breakfast cereals  
Tea bags  
Peanut butter

Instant coffee  
Packaged cookies  
Granola bars  
Chocolate bars  
Fruit cups  
Jam  
Rice



# THANK YOU

## TO THESE COMPASSIONATE ORGANIZATIONS

Frederick and Douglas Dickson Memorial Foundation	\$10,000.00	First Church of Christ, Scientist	\$2,165.83
Rizzo Custom Built Homes	\$10,000.00	Knights of Columbus, Chinese Martyrs Council 15463	\$1,250.00
Hicks Morley Hamilton Stewart Storie LLP	\$5,000.00	Knights of Columbus, St. Francis Xavier Council #12067	\$1,125.00
The McLean Foundation	\$2,500.00	WW (Peter) Southam Fund at Toronto Foundation	\$568.22
		Thunder Bay Centre of the Deaf	\$500.00
		CND Visitation Province	
		Jackman Foundation	
		J.S. Cheng & Partners Inc.	
		The Corporate Group of Companies	



Growing  
Community  
while  
Growing  
Vegetables

Good Shepherd's community garden plot gives homeless men staying at Good Shepherd Centre a chance to reconnect with nature — plus a chance to connect with the community.

“People chat and help each other out at the community garden,” says Danielle, Good Shepherd’s Client Outreach and Community Engagement Worker, who organizes the garden crew.

“Our Good Shepherd garden crew can be a real help to the other gardeners. When the local gardeners get to know the homeless men who rely on Good Shepherd, it reduces stigma. How many people imagine that a ‘homeless guy’ can love gardening? It helps people see each other with compassion.”

**A big thank you to everyone who helped the garden grow this year!**

Founded in 1963, Good Shepherd Ministries is a registered charity and a mission of the



**Hospitaller Order of Saint John of God**  
*Province of the Good Shepherd in North America*

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