



RESET, REIMAGINE, REFRESH, REVITALIZE

House Oxford

Homes For Recovery

Annual Report
2021-2022

OUR MISSION

TO PROVIDE PEOPLE
IN RECOVERY FROM
ADDICTIONS,
A SUPPORTIVE
PROGRAM AND SAFE
HOME TO ACHIEVE
A PRODUCTIVE,
REWARDING, CLEAN
SOBER LIFE.

We believe in the goodness,
dignity and potential of
men and women with
alcohol and drug addiction
and that, by providing them
with safe and affordable
housing, they will have the
best opportunity for full,
long-term recovery.

OUR VISION

TO ESTABLISH
RECOVERY HOMES
WITH ENGAGED
COMMUNITIES
LOOKING TO DEVELOP
CLEAN AND SOBER
LIVING FOR PEOPLE
COMMITTED TO
RECOVERY.

182 days

AVERAGE STAY IN AN
OXFORD HOUSE HOME

APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022



Oxford House Peer-Supported Model

AS ADDICTION PROGRESSES, individuals have less and less interaction with healthy, non-addicted peers. This is often because friends and family will disengage from the individual with addictions. As the addiction occupies more and more of the addict's time, their entire social circle becomes other people who are associated with the addiction.

One of the greatest challenges in recovery is disengaging from the influence of negative substance using peers. Living in Oxford House provides a ready-made support network that will role model coping skills to manage stress without using substances. When an individual observes others maintaining abstinence, it can increase the self-efficacy in the observer because they will believe that they can do the same.

Peer support is a critical component in Oxford House. Peers provide each other with social and emotional support, accountability, mentorship, and role models for recovery.

By having no end date to the program, Oxford House aligns with the longevity of a chronic disease care model and program participants often exceed the recommended minimum length of stay in treatment. Currently, the average length of stay of Oxford House residents is 182 days, or approximately 6 months, with the longest residency being 12 years by one resident.

Studies show that a residency of at least 6 months in an Oxford House can have a critical impact on an individual's sobriety. After 6 months of residency, residents demonstrated improved and stabilized self-efficacy abstinence. This is thought to be due to the peer support and long-term stable living environments that Oxford Houses provide.

Message *from the* Chair



Rod Wilkinson
Chair of the Board

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Sunrise Healing Lodge
HONORARY DIRECTOR

ON BEHALF of the Board of Directors, management, and staff of Oxford House, I am pleased to present the 26th Annual Report.

As you will read in this report, the theme for Oxford House this year and into 2023 is: Reset, Reimagine, Refresh and Revitalize. To that, I might add my personal goal to remind everyone what a wonderful resource and service Oxford House provides for those seeking safe and affordable housing and support — real support — in managing their recovery from addictions.

In resetting our goals, we must take stock of what we have been through in the past many months. I recall saying last year that we were looking to the time when COVID would be behind us. While it remains a threat, we will continue to be vigilant and I'm pleased to report that people are easing back into a more "normal" way of life again, thanks in large part to the policies and practices diligently followed by our leadership team, staff and volunteers at Oxford House.

Going forward, our theme reflects a renewed energy within the organization to re-examine our role in the mental health and addictions sector of Alberta. The Board and management have embarked upon a strategic planning process to help formulate our plans for the future and thanks to our Executive Director, Earl Thiessen, and his leadership team, public awareness of who we are and the importance of what we do is increasing. This increased awareness has opened the door to opportunities with key strategic partners, such as the Calgary Homeless Foundation, which has provided enormous support in several areas, as well as the Civil Societies Fund of Alberta for their support with Indigenous ceremonies.

Of particular significance is the fact that in April this year Oxford House was awarded the contract to manage and operate the Recovery Coaches Alberta program, a pilot project sponsored by the provincial government. It is testament to the trust people have in our organization and our approach to addictions recovery that we have been charged to assist with this important task.

In closing, I'd like to thank the members of the Board, the Executive Director, staff and support workers for their many hours of diligent and valuable service to the organization. We work as a team with the single-minded purpose of helping people in recovery.

And finally, we are grateful to and for you: our donors and volunteers. The importance of your support is all the more crucial and we look forward to engaging with you and working with you as we develop our plans for the future.

With grateful thanks,

Rod Wilkinson

Chair, Oxford House Foundation

Message *from the* Executive Director



Earl Thiessen
Executive Director

*“So very grateful
for the peer support
I’ve grown to have
with the people in
Oxford House, both
the residents and the
office staff.”*

2021-2022 HAS BEEN A WHIRLWIND OF ACTIVITY FOR OXFORD HOUSE. We have made some much-needed upgrades in our recovery homes over the past few years, but there is still much to do to stay true to our credo, *“We will not move a resident into a home that we would not move our own family into.”*

Early in 2022, we entered into a contract with Recovery Coaches of Alberta (RCA) and the Government of Alberta as part of a pilot project. Our support staff were trained, and mentorship with RCA will continue throughout the two-year contract. The Recovery Coaches Program aims to meet participants where they are at in their recovery process — assisting people in their recovery journey before and after treatment by bridging individuals back to their community and to healthy natural support systems.

I have had many requests to share my story and Oxford House’s story with interested groups, individuals, and the media. Oxford House is actively playing a role in reducing the stigma surrounding addiction, intergenerational trauma, and mental health issues.

The forward motion at Oxford House in providing a safe place for our residents to heal has been steady, and our occupancy rates are the strongest they’ve been in the past five years. Oxford House awareness is still on the uptick, and our fundraising efforts and other revenue streams reflect this.

All Oxford House staff are passionate about what they do and should be commended for their tireless efforts in working together toward the finish line to ensure everything from financial accuracy, Oxford House awareness, and support for our residents is well managed. The support team has seized the opportunity of partnering with Recovery Coaches Alberta while continuing to house residents and learn a new way of operating together. This is the largest team we’ve had since the inception of Oxford House, and we are still growing.

The road to building the future of Oxford House is paved with trust, careful thought, and implementation. We have all heard *“Slow and steady wins the race,”* I am not sure if it comes down to a race but rather intentionally making our way to the finish line, which is always in sight. Still, one never really reaches that finish line if we constantly evolve and, even more so, adapt to all the changes and uncertainty that today’s world entails. Just as important is our commitment to transparently and to clearly communicate where that finish line is so that you, our residents, supporters, volunteers, and friends, can know the road we’re on and participate in getting us there.

The support and guidance of the Oxford House Board of Directors is valued as we walk together through this unprecedented time of growth, sharing in the challenges and opportunities along the way.

With the development of our Strategic Plan and a Capital Study underway, and the HMIS Housing Specialist pilot project we have undertaken with the Calgary Homeless Foundation; I can see 2022-2023 being a very developmental year in which we will endeavour to clearly demonstrate how Oxford House fits into the continuum of care and the important role that our peer-supported model plays within the sector. We are defining what it means for other organizations and us to intentionally work together while leaning into the expertise that each partner offers.

We are so grateful and encouraged by the support we've received from our stakeholders. I would like to thank our donors, residents, funders, and friends for their commitment to Oxford House, and I look forward to the work we will do together this year.

Earl Thiessen

Executive Director, Oxford House

107 men and women went through Oxford House Pre-treatment Housing

APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022

▼
51
WENT TO
TREATMENT

▼
5
MOVED OUT
SOBER

▼
6
TRANSFERRED TO AN OXFORD HOUSE
TRANSITIONAL RECOVERY HOUSE

▼
63%
SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED
THE PROGRAM

Recovery Capital Conference 2022 ▼



Oxford House *community support*



Ride for Refuge: A huge shout out to our sponsors, team captains, participants and donors — together we raised over \$50,000!



PURDY NICE
Real Estate



A celebratory lunch with outgoing Board Members Kim Walmsley and Leanne Bear Froese.



Oxford House and Calgary Drug Treatment Court formed a partnership to house drug treatment court clients in one of Oxford House's homes.



Earl was the keynote speaker for AGA Academy Addictions Program Graduates in 2021.

L-R: Earl Thiessen and Abby Villnueva, President and CEO of AGA Academy



On a tour of Red Woman House.
L-R: Jerron Isaac, Resident Daniela, Leela Aheer, Karen Gosbee, Earl Thiessen



A book donation from the "In Memory of Sawyer" Facebook group.
L-R: Tracey Twitney, Pam Ohler, Earl Thiessen



Members from AGA Academy drop off towels for Oxford House homes.

Agency Connections

Alberta Works
Alcove
Aventa
Calgary Alpha House
Calgary Drug Treatment Court
Calgary Food Bank
Claresholm Centre for Mental Health & Addictions
Foothills Detox Centre
Fresh Start Recovery Society
Grace House Drumheller Society for Recovery
Henwood Residential Treatment Program
Jellinek Society
Lander Treatment Centre
Poundmaker's Lodge Treatment Centres
Prospect Career LINKS
Recovery Acres – Addictions Treatment & Counselling Centre
Renfrew Recovery Centre Addiction Services
Simon House Recovery Society
Sunrise Healing Lodge



Former resident, Frank, drops off a donation of pots and pans.



Allison

FOR OVER A DECADE, ALLISON MAINTAINED HER SOBRIETY. She was active in AA, went to meetings and drinking was the furthest thing from her mind. Then life got busy with kids, and she became complacent with her program. Around that time her relationship with her husband also became difficult, and she was trying to leave her marriage. Everything seemed to be going wrong and Allison's anxiety kicked in.

"I thought I could handle it with a bit of self-medicating. No one would ever guess I was drinking again. I was able to hide it for a time, but then people started to suspect and found out my secret and my family stopped trusting me. It was a toxic situation and my friends and family saw my life pouring out. I had become just a shell of myself. My drinking made a very difficult situation worse. But I kept doing it. In those times when my life was very stressful, I would start again, then stop, then start again. I couldn't stay stopped. Eventually my whole life blew up and I stopped being reliable, so I went to a treatment centre.

The treatment centre was a positive experience for her. Allison figured it was a good re-set, and she left there determined to set boundaries for herself and complete her divorce. Unfortunately, Allison let herself be manipulated by her husband again. She tried to manage the relationship, but it just got worse.

"I ended up drinking again and went to another treatment centre. That's when I figured out that my gateway addiction is co-dependency. I know now how

much behavioral addiction parallels substance addiction and I would do these things to make me feel better under the guise of 'I'm just helping people, and I just want to make everything okay.' Making everything okay is my way of making myself feel better. In my relationships with family, with friends, with coworkers, that's what I do. I've since had to learn how to be assertive, and that's not my nature, I wasn't brought up like that. I grew up learning to stuff my feelings down and make everything okay. So, after my second time in treatment, I decided I need to finally finish this divorce and I need support to do it. Then COVID hit and everyone was in cohorts."

Allison moved into her Oxford House in March 2021. She learned about Oxford House through a friend in her home group who had lived in an Oxford House two years earlier; the same house Allison lives in now. She figured she would stay for just a few months until her personal life and financial matters were settled. But it became clear to her that she still had a lot of work to do with her codependency, recognizing that she continued trying to please everyone, worrying about outcomes and not taking care of herself. Having never lived alone, Allison really appreciated the built-in support in her Oxford House home. She hadn't realized the impact the support from her roommates would have in her life. Having peer support in her home has been huge for Allison and has given her the confidence she needs to apply all she's learned in her outside relationships.

“I knew if I came home in a state the girls were here, ready and willing to talk about whatever happened right away and I'd have the support I needed... The women have really helped me, and I hope I've been able to help them figure out some things along the way as well.”

"I've learned so much about my behaviour addiction in talking with my sponsor, things I couldn't see in my multiple years of sobriety. I think a lot of bad situations had to happen before I was able to understand 'oh this is why I act like that; this is why my relationships were like this' and that comes from doing shadow work and inner child work and being able to sit with the discomfort of it, knowing it's not going to last forever. I didn't have to self-medicate. All I needed was to talk to my sponsor and have the support of the women in the house. It didn't take long to bond and create a connection with the women who live here with me. I knew if I came home in a state the girls were here, ready and willing to talk about whatever happened right away and I'd have the support I needed. Living with four women I've also had to learn how to set boundaries and talk about the things that bug me instead of letting things fester. This has been hard. I hate conflict but we are able to talk things through. It's just been so nice to have people around that I can do that with. The women have really helped me, and I hope I've been able to help them figure out some things along the way as well."

"I keep saying every time I go to meetings, I relapsed a bunch of times, but I don't regret any of it because I've learned so much in the last couple of years, more than I ever learned in my previous multiple years of sobriety. Having the women here and being able to come and talk about things and have support is amazing, even if we have an argument or someone doesn't think I'm their favourite person in the house, if something happens with one of us, we have each other's backs and that's what this house has been."

Allison admits she did not understand how Oxford House worked when she first moved in, but she is glad she stayed longer than she first intended and adds, "Oxford House is not just somewhere you leave your belongings and go to work. It's somewhere you're meant to work on yourself. I'm super thankful that Oxford House was here for me and still is."

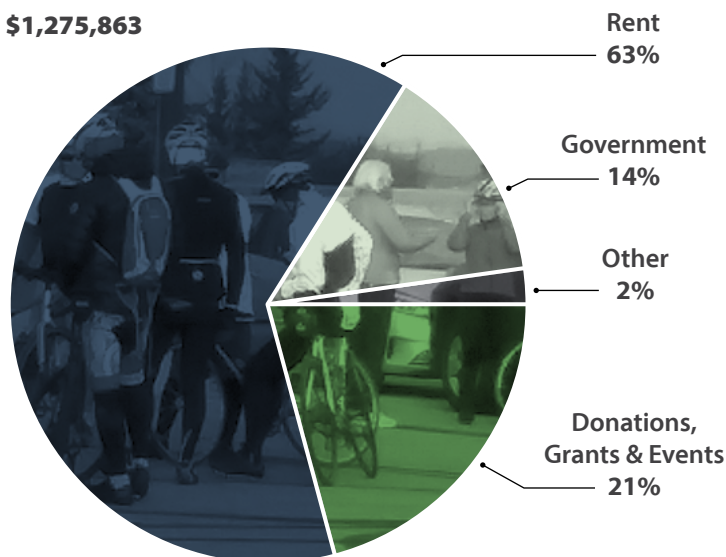
Oxford House *financials*

APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022

Audited financial statements available upon request.

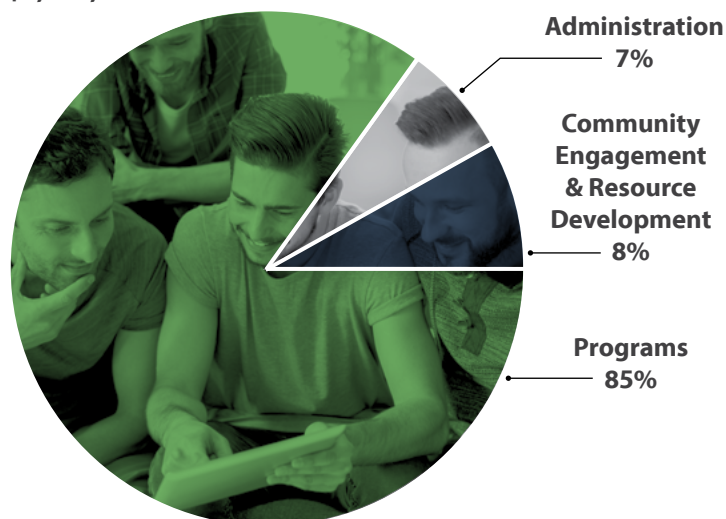
OPERATIONS *revenue*

\$1,275,863



OPERATIONS *expenses*

\$1,164,820



Oxford House is eternally grateful to all our donors. Together you ensured that 29 men and women had a safe, sober and supported place to call home for an entire year!

413

FOOD BANK REFERRALS
WERE PROVIDED

APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022

“My Oxford House home has been a major turning point in my life. It has provided me a safe place to live clean and sober while putting pieces of my life back together. Thanks for giving me a chance.”

320

INDIVIDUALS WERE
ASSISTED WITH INCOME

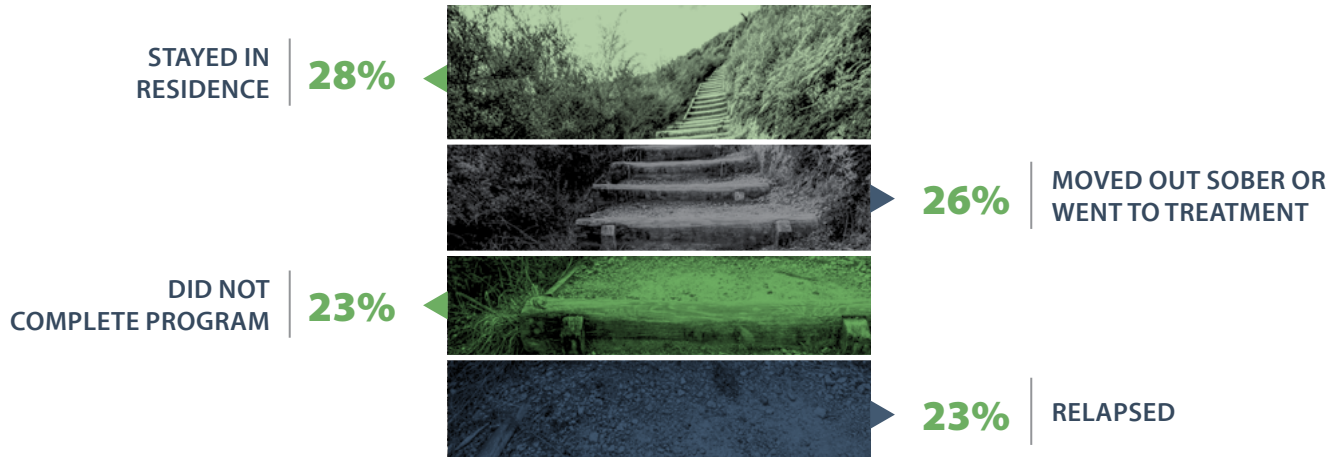
APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022

OXFORD HOUSE IS GRATEFUL FOR THE SUPPORT FROM



Outcomes

APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022



390 unique individuals were served at Oxford House

APRIL 2021 – MARCH 2022



When your commitment to yourself is greater than your desire to use.
We've got you. You get out of your recovery what you put into it.

– Earl Thiessen, Executive Director





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