

MAY 01, 2017

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to inform you that I am a retired psychiatrist who practiced in Victoria, BC. 1981- 2012. Last year, I had the privilege of being asked to join the Board of Directors of the newly formed non-profit Connections Place Society in Victoria.

As you know, this passionate impressive group is striving to establish an accredited psychosocial rehabilitation program for individuals with severe mental illnesses. It will be based on the highly successful Clubhouse International model, which was a recipient of the prestigious Conrad N. Hilton Humanitarian Award in 2014 for extraordinary contributions towards alleviating human suffering.

Connections Place is being mentored by the nationally recognized Richmond, BC Pathways Clubhouse, which has earned a four-star rating from Charity Intelligence Canada. It has a Societal Return on Investment (SROI) of \$14 to \$1.

After a long career assessing and treating >8000 patients with mental illness and their families, I am acutely aware of the shortcomings in our psychiatric treatment delivery system here in Victoria. The predominant focus is understandably on hospital-based inpatient and outpatient assessment and treatment, and there are well established valuable community-based programs such as the Cool Aid Society, Our Place and Island Community Mental Health.

However, in my opinion there is a dire need for a comprehensive daily program where those individuals with chronic severe mental illnesses can learn to work and socialize within a caring therapeutic community. They will eventually have access to trial employment with businesses that support Connections Place and ultimately be able to secure permanent gainful employment. There will also be supported educational opportunities and eventually housing availability with ongoing support.

There are literally hundreds of mentally ill young adults 18-30 years old currently living unfulfilling lives in the homes of their parents or in substandard basement suites. These lost souls will have a much better chance of living satisfying and happy lives if a Clubhouse International program is available in the Victoria area.

Sincerely yours,

Dr. D. C. Stovel