



U-Turn Centre

Offers New Direction to Conception Bay North Residents

● by **SUSAN BONNELL**
Photography by Phil Simms

What do you do when an addiction has you at the end of the road? Residents in the Carbonear area now have a place to turn, thanks to a community effort that epitomizes Eastern Health's vision of *Healthy People, Healthy Communities*; shows our "connectedness" value in action; and breathes life into our strategic priorities.

"There's no doubt about it," says **Beverley Clarke**, Vice-President responsible for Mental Health and Addictions and Community Health Services, "the U-Turn Centre in Carbonear demonstrates the ideal in full-continuum health care service delivery."

U-Turn's Facebook page describes the centre as "a non-profit organization that is committed to helping individuals through the process of addiction recovery."

But if you ask Jeff Bourne, U-Turn is the fulfillment of a dream, and "a pile of talk" turned into action!

Jeff is a recovering alcoholic and drug addict from the Trinity Conception area whose own life path through addictions has landed him as the driving force behind the U-Turn Centre. On any given day, Jeff and wife Tammy can be found talking to people who drop in, arranging rides to the Recovery Centre in St. John's, and connecting addicts from all walks of life with community, legal and health care supports.

When asked if he is proud of the Centre and what he has been a part of accomplishing Jeff beams, but he is quick to add, "You know, when you're in recovery, you got to be humble."

"People like Jeff and Tammy Bourne really do the lion's share of work," contends Pastoral Care Clinician Curt Clark.

Curt is one of a dedicated group of individuals who have been working for the last decade on bringing pastoral care – usually the domain of hospitals and long-term care facilities – into the community.

"The pastoral care service we offer in rural Avalon is the first of its kind in Canada, and likely in North

America,” says Curt. “No one else is making this community health-pastoral care connection.

“We really see the value of that partnership, because community churches have a lot of resources that they can use to partner with Eastern Health, from volunteers to shovel driveways to offering food and rides – it’s all part in parcel of spiritual counseling.”

An Idea Sprouts

The seeds for the U-Turn Centre were being sown in a number of places at the same time. Church groups, legacy organizations, individuals and government all had a general sense that there were significant addictions issues in this area. For one thing, says Curt, people like Jeff were talking openly about their struggles through addictions and recovery.

“We came together to form the Community Addiction Awareness Committee: clergy, volunteers from the churches, Eastern Health addictions professionals, researchers, criminal justice representatives, probations officers and the Mounties,” says Curt. “We did a study which showed us that the abuse of certain prescription drugs in this area is way above the rest of the province.”

Armed with this evidence, the



JEFF AND TAMMY BOURNE

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committee identified needs and approached the government, who were more than willing to support this cause. Aside from the new treatment centre planned for the Harbour Grace area, government supported the development of a drop-in centre to connect people looking for help with health care providers, and to support addicts post-treatment through their recovery.

U-Turn not only offers those connections but is also a base for many recovery groups and a “safe

haven” for people working their way past their addiction.

Says Jeff: “You can only see your counselor for one hour in the day. Where do you go in between? That’s what this Centre does. It gives people a place to go to just be around other positive people.

“On any given day, I’m calling the contacts I have throughout the system and saying to them, ‘listen I got someone here who needs to talk to a counselor right away,’ and it happens. You know, you could waste weeks going through hoops,

but having this Centre makes those connections happen for people right away.

“It’s a real good thing for people.”

For Jeff and for all the Eastern Health staff and community supporters who are helping to make U-Turn a meaningful part of addictions recovery, the reason for all the hard work is easy.

“I do what I do on behalf of someone who needs it. And listen; sometimes, I’m fighting for their life.” ■

Time for a U-Turn?

Do you feel as if you have reached the end of the road? Has your life become unmanageable? Maybe it's time to make a U-Turn and begin your new life!

The U-Turn Mission

Our mission is to assist individuals who are struggling with addictions and provide support to families and communities by:

- Providing a supportive and safe environment for all visitors to the centre.
- Making referrals to professional services and advocating on behalf of individuals and families in need due to addiction issues.
- Providing the opportunity for fun safe and clean activities for individuals, families and communities that highlight an addiction free lifestyle.

Show your support for U-Turn by liking their Facebook page!



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