

In looking back, it is very unfortunate how many years it took me to become a resident of Our House (Edmonton) Ltd. My first attempt at recovery started in the year 1998, this as a result of attending the 30 day AADAC program at Henwood. It was there that I attended my first AA meeting, and introduced to the 12 steps. It should be stated, that at Henwood, although they do have meetings, they do not require the resident's to actually work on the steps. I left Henwood and managed to stay sober six months. During this time I did attend a few meetings and made the assumption this would keep me clean and sober. I still had no clue how to "get a sponsor" or a "home group" and the importance that both represent.

My next attempt at treatment was in the year 2000. My doctor suggested the AADAC Northern Addictions Centre at Grand Prairie, Alberta. This, I was told, was to be a more intense thirty day program of recovery. The program itself consisted of group sessions as well as work on the first 5 steps of any 12 step addictions program. Although beneficial, I found doing the 5 steps within thirty days was rushed and lacked the emotional feeling of accomplishment. Again, I did manage to put certain periods of time together to maintain periods of sobriety, five months being the longest. My addiction convinced me to attempt two other thirty day programs, again at Henwood as well as Grand Prairie, Alberta. I just could not seem to put any length of time together maintaining my sobriety. My social skills suffered, my finances were in disarray, my own emotional well being was in question, I was one sick individual. I lacked self esteem, spirituality and hope. I had no direction and my own self worth was questionable.

What brought me to Our House is two events, the first being the realization that thirty day programs didn't stop my using, the second was through the intervention by a friend, who, at the time, was a resident of Our House. He told me of a program which was long term, offered care and concern, had daily group sessions and a strong commitment to the addiction program. And the insistence to work the 12 steps to the best of one's ability. In retrospect, I now say that Our House has provided me with better knowledge as to the amount of work required to do the steps. The actual books used to cover an individual step are not of a generic nature, but are accumulated information provide by Alcoholic Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous. I realized the difference when attempting step one. I would have to say upon my arrival at "Our House" that the staff and counselors gave me a welcome I didn't have for a long time. They were, for a time, my backbone and provided me with emotional support and direction. My undertaking was to adhere to a schedule of daily events and this brought back a feeling of responsibility. These to me were very small steps in my return to responsibility and self worth, even making my bed after a time was rewarding. My first module was an exercise on common budgeting systems. I haven't budgeted since 1998, my addiction took that from me. When I arrived at Our House my parents had just paid my 8,000.00 visa statement. Other three week modules consisted of communication, stress management, leisure activities, relaxation and many others. You have to recognize that I needed to learn common "God given" talents all over again. I personally enjoyed the self esteem module and the "Life Skills" seminar. Our House, through the one year commitment program has restored my hope, my own self worth and a connection to spirituality. I now have an acute awareness of the 12 step program, the importance of a sponsor, the need to attend meetings on a regular basis and the gift of knowing myself. All of these will provide me with a life of fulfillment and, for that, I owe Our House a huge "Thank You". Our House, as stated, has renewed my zest for life and loving all.

Best Regards,

B. Mark L.