



Providing education, innovative programming, support and hope for individuals or families dealing with or concerned about substance abuse/addiction.

# Parents Empowering Parents

Summer 2015

## Our Journey with Addiction

**Parents can't imagine, let alone consider that their child may be developing an addiction, a progressive brain disease. Not My Child!**

Society is ignorant and has stigmatized this disease. We are embarrassed to admit, but we believed the stereotyping. To us, addiction was for dysfunctional families, living in impoverished circumstances, born to addicts, prostitutes, and abusive parents – abused, orphaned children whose circumstances were so dire that drugs and alcohol were a necessary evil, an escape mechanism; a vicious circle akin to a select defunct minority. But then it happened in our home; a loving, caring, nurturing home where the kids were never spared privileges and opportunities abounded.

We were reeling from despair, shock, denial and exasperation of being forced to deal with this nightmarish, terrifying, confusing, and destructive place called addiction. We found ourselves blindly navigating this mine field; feeling extremes from hopelessness, a failure to..... “I can control this”, “I will fix this” – to no avail. The problem was spiraling out of control, our home was dysfunctional and chaotic; and we were snapping under the strain.

Our son had been an easy child to raise. He was compliant, happy, compassionate and loving. He had his learning difficulties, but always persevered to overcome his challenges at school. We have a strong marriage and always showered our children with love and positive attention. We have both been active participants in their schooling and extracurricular activities. Given our son's character and upbringing, we had great expectations that he would succeed and grow into an upstanding, responsible young man.

Unfortunately we cannot immunize our children against addiction, and there is no amount of preventative upbringing, love, attention, or education that can guarantee safe keeping from it.

At first his behavior was considered to be normal teenage behavior, given that most teenagers experiment with alcohol and marijuana and become more assertive

in their quest for independence. Although we didn't approve and reprimanded him for abusing alcohol and smoking marijuana and general disrespectful behavior; there was denial, “it is not that serious, it is just a phase”; minimalizing, “You don't get addicted to alcohol or marijuana, only serious drugs”. Making excuses for him like, “The poor school results is normal for him, he has always had ADD and battled at school”. Then there were the mood swings, bouts of rage, complete defiance. Once again these were attributed to hormone changes, typical of teenagers. But the behaviors became progressively worse and intolerable. Encounters with the law, rampant truancy, running away from home for extended periods refusing to tell us where he was staying. Over time he became more fidgety, overly sensitive, hot tempered, uncooperative, lethargic and personal hygiene waned. No motivation to do anything and simple requests to join us for dinner turned into volatile altercations.

We were grappling with lack of sleep and unable to focus on our day to day life as the addiction tightened its stranglehold on our family core and sanity.

*continued on page 2*

Visit  
[www.pepsociety.com](http://www.pepsociety.com)  
for upcoming events  
and collaborations  
with community  
partners

There is no amount of preventative upbringing, love, attention or education that can guarantee safe keeping from it.

## Our Journey with Addiction

*continued from page 1*

Enough was enough! But what could we do? We were fortunate to be directed to PEP by the RCMP and the school. PEP helped us realize that “normal” families like ours were tormented by similar issues, we were not alone. “Tough love” was the name of the game and we had to set in firm boundaries with consequences we were willing to enforce. PCHAD was our first port of call; a valuable intervention that gave us momentary reprieve from the turmoil and an educational bout for our son to reconsider his choices. This led to our son going to a six week day treatment program, another valuable intervention giving him focus and purpose. But sadly this was short lived. Influences from old friends and girlfriends led him back to his comfort zone, the zone where he felt validated, and we slowly lost him again. Our home returned to the violent outbursts and chaos and, after enduring it for several months, we gave him the choice....conform to our rules of respectful behavior and zero drugs or choose to live elsewhere. The stakes were high, but he still decided to follow his own path, at both his and our expense. So we reinforced the consequences and took him to YESS (Youth Empowerment and Support Services). This was a very painful decision for us, and it was clouded in anxiety, second guessing, guilt, despair and sadness, anger and disappointment. But we persevered and left him there. We could see the realization on his face of the enormity of his situation as we drove away, but the heat of the moment gave us the courage to continue our journey home.

The journey was a long and painful one for us. For nine months, we remained out of our son's life, only taking glimpses when he chose to text us, seeing him on very few special occasions like his birthday. It was tough, and towards the

end he started reaching out to us more desperately; playing on our emotions of guilt and fear, encouraging us to reconsider our position. This drew us back into the emotional rollercoaster of should we, shouldn't we? There was a fear of wasting all the pain of the past by being too hasty to let him back in. Would he change or would we just be back at square one? The negotiations with him were stern, the boundaries tighter than ever before, the consequences reinforced. Of course he agreed to all, but we had our doubts. We feared he would get a foot in the door and hold us hostage to his behavior again. We feared that we would not be able to have the tenacity and endurance to enforce the boundaries and once again suffer the long periods of absence. It was almost better to keep the status quo, deal with the pain you know, than deal with the fear and mistrust.

Thankfully to date our fears have not materialized. We have had our son back in our home and our daily lives for five months and it has been relatively pleasant and enjoyable. He has remained drug free; he is meeting his obligations of school; he regularly attends **U-Turn**, an invaluable and safe resource that has given him a positive outlet to deal with his issues and make positive changes. He has lost years in his development and is playing catch-up, and the toughest thing to do is meet him where he is at. But every day we strive for this; and he too is working hard, a team effort of changing ourselves to the benefit of all has brought much reward in our family life.

The firm boundaries and enforced consequences have worked for us. I encourage all parents to find the courage to persevere. It is not easy, but in the long run it will pay off. How long is anyone's guess and is on a case by case basis, but the sooner you start the sooner you will get results. And finally, the PEP mantra “Change Begins With Me” rings true. And this change needs to be maintained.

*A Parent and PEP Board Member*

(Motivational Education for Ex-Drug Dealers)

## Testimonial of a MEDD-X Graduate

**When I first came to PEP, I was very nervous and intimidated by being in the room with parents on the other end of the life I was living. I soon realized that all the parents were very nice and supportive. I really got to know them and I tried very hard to become an asset to the program. I have 100% better understanding on how drugs affect the community and the families of the addict as well as me. I soon realized that I was wasting my life and decided it was time for change. It starts with me!**

**PEP (Parents Empowering Parents) is a part of me and a part of my life.**

**AN EX-DRUG DEALER**

### COMING SOON

*Love You Forever*

*A Gathering of Hope & Healing*

PEP Society believes grief needs to be acknowledged and experienced for healing to begin. Please join us for a gathering of friends and families who have been impacted by the loss of a loved one in addiction.

September 25, 2015  
7pm to 9pm  
Festival Place  
Sherwood Park



**PARENTS  
EMPOWERING  
PARENTS**

For More Information:  
[www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca)  
Office: 780.410.8516  
Parent Support Line: 780.293.0737

## Meetings

are held every Tuesday  
(7-9pm) in alternating  
locations

### Sherwood Park

Strathcona County Hall  
2001 Sherwood Drive

June 9	July 21
June 23	August 4
July 7	August 18

### Millwoods

Sunrise Community Church  
3303 37 Street NW (upstairs)  
Edmonton

June 2	July 14
June 16	July 28
June 30	August 11
	August 25



# LUNCH & LEARN

# INVEST IN CHANGE

# INVEST IN YOUR COMMUNITY

by Lerena Greig

John Maxwell, author states “Change is inevitable but growth is optional”.

At Parents Empowering Parents, we believe that growth needs to be intentional. In that belief, we continue to grow our innovative programs to families in crisis and empower change.

One life changed has a positive impact on our community and one life in addiction can have a negative ripple effect.

On May 5th, Statistics Canada released a report stating that higher crime rates in Northern Alberta are a part of a larger systematic issue tied to addiction and poverty; stats show that the crime rate in our communities range from 2-4 times the national average. The high crime rates aren't the fault of the communities themselves but a part of a “complex issue” that goes hand in hand with addiction, poverty, and lack of proper housing.

Did you know that recent conservative studies show that every \$1 invested in addiction treatment or programs like PEP's, returns an immediate yield of \$4- \$7 in reduced drug-related crime, criminal justice costs, and theft alone? When savings related to health care are included, total savings can exceed costs by a ratio of 12 to 1. Major savings to the individual and to society also come from significant drops in interpersonal

conflicts, improvements in workplace productivity, and reductions in drug-related accidents (based on excerpts from National Institute on Drug Abuse).

Invest in our communities by supporting programs like Parents Empowering Parents and you will see a return on your investment. Would you consider making a monthly commitment by clicking on our donations tab and hitting the button DONATE NOW? Together we are stronger and can change these statistics for a safer community and a brighter future for our children.

Every \$1 invested in addiction programs like PEP's, returns an immediate yield of \$4-\$7 in reduced drug-related crime, criminal justice costs and theft alone?

**Lerena Greig**  
Executive Director  
Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society

## We Care and Share Your Values

Parents Empowering Parents (PEP) Society would like to offer to your employees and their families an educational seminar that will have a positive impact on safety and health and wellness. For over 10 years, PEP has been offering innovative services to the community and surrounding areas and is well respected by our community partners and supporters. Our presentations are professionally managed with an educational component as well as resource information for families in crisis of substance abuse or addiction.

## Benefits of Employee and Family Wellness

When a workplace becomes involved in assisting employees, spouses and their family members, everybody benefits; the company, the employee, the family, the community.

Lower absenteeism, reduced sick leave; productivity and workplace safety improves along with the mental health of the employee and the family which builds stronger and healthier communities.

When there is a substance abuse problem in the family, there can be consequences in the workplace.

For more details on this opportunity, please contact Lerena Greig, Executive Director @ 780.410.8516 or pep@strathcona.ca

## Thank You to our Partnerships, Supporters, and Parents

With your help, we are working together to empower families in crisis towards health and wellness.

Most recent grants (funding) awarded 2015 acknowledgement:

MEDD-X Program Grant

Felix and Pat Kuefler Fund



Newsletter design by  
Halkier+Dutton Design

## With a one-time gift

- \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  
 \$500  \$1000  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## With a monthly gift

- \$25  \$50  \$100  \$250  
 \$500  \$1000  Other: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

- Yes, I would like to subscribe to your email notifications

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ Prov. \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Gifts by:  Cheque  VISA  Mastercard

Card Number \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry Date \_\_\_\_\_ Amount \_\_\_\_\_

Security Code \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Mail form to: Parents Empowering Parents, 2001 Sherwod Drive, Sherwood Park, AB T8A 3W7 or Fax 780-449-1220

## PEP Programs

### Parent Support Meetings

PEP convenes weekly to provide support, education, strength, and hope to parents and families of youth, young adults, and/or adult children. Professionally facilitated discussion provides insight and direction for parents and families dealing with their child's substance abuse issues. No registration is required to attend these drop in meetings, which are held:

**Weekly on Tuesdays from 7pm to 9pm alternating locations each week:**

#### Sherwood Park

Strathcona County Community Centre, 2001 Sherwood Drive, Sherwood Park

June 9      July 14  
June 23     August 4  
July 7      August 18

#### Millwoods

Sunrise Community Church, 3303-37 Street NW (upstairs), Edmonton

June 2      July 14  
June 16     July 28  
June 30     August 11  
               August 25

For the schedule of dates for each location, see page 2 of this newsletter or visit our website at [www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca)

### Parent Mentorship Program

This program connects parents with parents. Mentors selected to listen, relate, share hope, share ideas, and provide additional support to parents new to PEP. Request for this service can be made with the meeting facilitator.

### U-Turn for youth

U-Turn supports youth & young adults involved in substance use to explore their situations through casual discussion and education in a no-pressure environment. Runs concurrently to the Sherwood Park PEP meetings. See website for schedule. Drop in Meeting. No registration required.

### MEDD-X

The Motivational Education for Ex-Drug Dealers (MEDD-X) is a recognized program that provides convicted drug dealers an opportunity to gain an understanding of their impact on individuals, families, and the community, while supporting parents/families with insight into the drug/street world. Participants for this program must be referred and approved by staff via phone 780.410.8516 or email [pep@strathcona.ca](mailto:pep@strathcona.ca)

## Rebuilding Hope Through Giving

PEP Society relies on individual donations, grants, corporate and community group support.

This equips us to support more families dealing with the effects of substance abuse and allows growth in the professionally facilitated programs that we offer.

### There are many ways to provide hope:

1. Monthly giving visit [www.pepsociety.ca](http://www.pepsociety.ca) and go to [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org)
2. Monthly donations directly mailed to PEP Society
3. One time donation mailed or on-line [www.CanadaHelps.org](http://www.CanadaHelps.org)
4. Year-end donation for tax reasons.
5. Directed by your request through the United Way (Alberta Capital Region)
6. Corporate Sponsorship
7. Third Party Fundraisers

Thank you for your consideration in supporting your community and rebuilding hope for families. PEP Society is a registered charity

