



# Monthly Newsletter

Volume 2 | October Issue | Piece of Mind

## *Announcement*

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Hyacinth's Place, helping to strengthen our community one woman at a time.



## *Inside This Issue*

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Word from the CEO

Our New Front

Wall of Puzzle



## OUR NEW FRONT

Last September, Community Forklift's Community Building Blocks (CBB) program provided Hyacinth's Place with free materials to build an outdoor patio area. With the pallet of salvaged pavers, two small secondhand patio sets, and a flowerpot, they've created a beautiful space for residents to use in their therapy. Relaxation helps in the quest for improved mental health. Evidence-based studies have cited this form of therapy — particularly in an urban setting — is effective. The intent of the project is to create an environment where women can live together in a place that nurtures and supports their recovery.

Although the project was pushed back because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it was recently completed and the residents have started using the space to relax, reflect, and even reconnect relationships. Once the work was completed the residents marveled at how nice and comfortable the area appeared.

## Wall of Puzzles



The jigsaw puzzle dates back to the 1700s, where it was created as an educational tool for children. It later gained mainstream popularity among adults during the Great Depression. They were considered cheap and easy to assemble, and they filled the empty days and empty evenings, writes novelist Margaret Drabble in her memoir *The Pattern in the Carpet: A Personal History with Jigsaws*.

Puzzles are highly recommended by doctors to keep your stress levels at bay, thereby improving your mental health. One key reason is that it allows you to focus on only one thing. While multi-tasking puts the frontal lobe of your brain under stress, single-tasking through good and engaging puzzles eliminates that stress.

Puzzles not only calm the mind...it quiet the mind...and that is something those of us over-thinkers desperately need. Jigsaw puzzles are a way to put that toddler down for a nap and have some peace for a while. Jigsaw puzzles help to de-Stress, improve memory and concentrations, lower your blood pressure and heart rate, teach Mindfulness, raise your IQ because it engages both sides of your brain at once. Your right brain is your creative side and your left is logical. Working a puzzle makes them BFFs — engaging them both at the same time. According to neuroscience physicians, when the left brain "sees all of the separate pieces, it attempts to sort them out logically," while the right brain "sees the 'big picture' and works intuitively." When both of your brain hemispheres are engaged at once, it creates connections between brain cells.



## 10 YEARS OF SERVICE TO THE HOMELESS MENTALLY ILL:

### Lessons Learnt:

*Challenges and rewards go hand in hand:*

*Honey is more appetizing than vinegar*

*People evolved with kindness, attention and a sense of security*

*Provide dreams: support the leap beyond immediate horizons & environment*

*Create a sense of home & security. Provide respect and guidance*

*The kindness of others makes all the difference*

*Enthusiasm of youth and dedication of Volunteers*

In November 2011 after seven year of diligence which included negotiations and continual community advocacy, fifteen formerly homeless women were now in beautifully furnished efficiency, a place they could call home. This dream, hard work lined with challenges and the kindness of others resulted in a beautiful non-profit organization named for the Aunt who encouraged me to dream: "Hyacinth's Place".

Developing and implementing programs, building partnerships, managing volunteers, developing the right staff, cultivating a dynamic Board of Directors and raising funds to keep our doors open, have characterized our ten years journey. Receiving a grant or a donation when we were at our lowest financially, gave us the energy to continue to soar. Riding the waves of bureaucracy and circumventing the feeling of powerless that leaves one drained, has to be managed so the work of saving lives and fulfilling our mission can continue.

Throughout this journey, the most valuable assets were the lesson implanted from advocacy, community involvement with constituents at all levels, and relentless meeting of the minds to share dreams. What I do know with certainty, that there is a lot of kindness in the world in which we live, willing to lend a helping hand if you were willing to meet the challenges.

There were not always successes but we learnt to digest the bitter with the sweet. Watching the transformation of women from who they were to who they became brought a sense of fulfilment that cannot be verbalized.

*Urla Barrow (CEO)*

