

Bringing God's love and hope to lives affected by poverty, addiction & mental illness

Matt's Story

By: Hope Versluis, Director



December 20, 2013, while the Ottawa CTV News reported a story of a string of thefts starting with a car and ending with an assault on a store employee, Matt sat in a jail cell, resting his head in his hands. It had finally caught up with him – the drugs, the crimes, the insanity. Would anyone care? People had always found Matt “useful.” As a kid, he had been the youngest Karate black belt in Canada. He was wanted on the sports teams, he was wanted at the parties, and with a growing drug and alcohol addiction, his karate and physical skills were wanted by the drug dealers. Matt had become part of the business of organized crime. It was a life of danger, risk, shame and fear - a life of increasing drug use and hopelessness.

Coming to Ottawa was Matt's attempt to run away from it all, but within days his life caught up to him and he was now serving a 6 month sentence at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre. Did anyone care? While at OCDC, Matt connected with some volunteers who regularly bring the Alpha program to the inmates. Interested, Matt asked the

Chaplain, Carl Wake, for a Bible to read. Carl suggested he start with the Gospel of John. After three days of reading the gospels, Matt found himself praying, “Jesus, I'm done. Help me do it your way.” He woke the next day with a sense of peace and a smile on his face. God knew Matt would need time – time to heal, to unlearn the old ways of thinking and to learn a new way of life. Matt got a hold of a pamphlet about Jericho Road's Addiction Recovery program and called the phone number. When his sentence was served, Matt moved from jail to Jericho Road.

Once at Jericho, Matt found addiction recovery takes time and it takes surrender. That was hard. Old patterns of thought had to be replaced by new patterns. Early in the program, Matt had a relapse and was sent to Detox before returning to Jericho Road. There were issues with stealing. He often had to live under “house arrest” and on the “buddy system.” But through it all, Matt learned a lot about grace, forgiveness and second chances as well as learning humility, surrender and making amends. When Matt graduated from the addiction program and moved into the Jericho second stage home, he was a very different man from that day of his arrest in December 2013. He had learned to think about other people and not just himself.

Today Matt is living in a Jericho Road second stage home. He maintains his recovery by staying connected to his recovery community, attending AA meetings and by doing service work.



Matt has now trained as a Jericho Road relief worker and works some shifts at Jericho's support homes and even at the Addiction Program. He loves to quote this Biblical wisdom from Romans 12:2 “**Don't copy the behavior of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think.**”

You see the benefits - Respond to the fruit!

GIVE - Respond with a donation. We need your financial support

PRAY – Ask God for increased sources of revenue for JRM

PROMOTE – Tell others about the work of Jericho Road

HOME

- **inclusion and interaction with others who understand one's feelings and experiences**
- **the stability and security of a home with routines and structure that support recovery**

COMMUNITY

- **Building a network of mutually supportive relationships in the recovery community**
- **Relationships that provide support, friendship, love and hope**

HEALTH

- **Living in a physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy way**
- **Sobriety, a hopeful state of mind and a consciousness of God's love and care**

PURPOSE

- **Having self-esteem, value, a hopeful, contributing life even with limitations of mental illness and/or addiction**

Bringing hope to lives broken by poverty, addiction and mental illness

At Jericho Road Ministries, we have a passion to see people move from discouragement to hope. That is why our mission statement says Jericho Road Ministries brings God's love and hope to lives affected by poverty, addiction and mental illness. We do this by providing a men's 12 step Addiction Recovery Program as well as group homes for men – both mental health support homes and second stage addiction recovery homes. There are also weekly programs such as the Coffee-house and the Recovery Connection Biblical study that connect people to the broader recovery community. JRM helps people gain purpose and connection and offers support in times of relapse and crisis. Living in the hope and love of Jesus Christ, we pass on this love to others, helping them gain mental health and addiction recovery by meeting their needs for **home, community, health and purpose** so they can in turn pass their hope onto others.

New Development Strategy

People involved with us on a day to day basis know JRM is making a difference. But that message needs to be told beyond our doors. So, we have created a Development Director portfolio. The Development Director will direct marketing and bring more visibility to JRM, as well as strengthen current partnerships and relationships and explore new opportunities for development.

To bring the mission, story and vision of Jericho Road to your agency, business, church and small group, contact us at info@jerichoroad.ca or 613 567 5134. Let's get the message out.

Home, community, health & purpose at Springhurst!



Our residents give back in various ways according to their interests and skills. Using recycled and donated materials, one resident built an elevated garden so that they could grow fresh vegetables this summer. It was built aboveground for Cecil who had back surgery in the spring, so that he could sit and garden comfortably! Everyone takes turns watering, weeding and caring for the gardens, even the indoor plants!

