

SUMMER 2022

# Update



EFry Blue Sky Summer Campers enjoying a day in nature.

## Meet Jordan: From summer camper to counsellor

Each summer, child and youth clients from age six to 17 take part in EFry's Blue Sky Summer Camps for a week of quintessential summer fun. Many of our campers return year after year. Initially, campers aged out at 13 but so many kids asked us to increase the age ceiling so they could keep coming, EFry developed junior and senior camp streams to make that possible. This year, we are pleased to welcome one of our longtime campers and former counsellor in training, Jordan, as a counsellor with a deep understanding of what makes EFry camps so special.

"I attended EFry summer camp from the time I was 12," says Jordan, now 21. "I loved it so much, I'd look forward to it all year. I'd been a counsellor at another camp that closed down when COVID hit and I was looking for a new camp

counsellor job. As soon as I saw EFry's logo, I knew I'd found where I wanted to be.

"EFry camp was a place where I could be around other kids who'd had similar life experiences. *cont'd on next page*



**EFry**  
Elizabeth Fry Society  
of Greater Vancouver

## Meet Jordan: From summer camper to counsellor

I was like everyone else, but also felt really valued for who I am. The counsellors were so supportive and made all of us feel important.”

The goal of our Blue Sky Summer Camps is to enable kids to be kids. Our campers have had some difficult life circumstances, so it’s important all our counsellors have the training to spot a child who needs support and have the ability help them.

“As a counsellor, I’ve received a full week of training on the impacts of trauma and how to help kids deal with that,” says Jordan. “I feel really prepared and it also helps me understand why my time as a camper felt so good. I am really looking forward to giving kids the kind of fun I had.”

EFry summer camps run until the end of August and are made possible solely thanks to donor support.

## Advocating for equitable access to substance use treatment

EFry was recently invited to speak before BC’s Standing Committee on Health to provide our perspectives on the overdose crisis and how to better support people struggling with substance use. Our presentation focused on the lack of equity the poor face in accessing treatment, the stigma created by those policies, and how people on social assistance are driven into homelessness by surprise loss of their housing when they enter drug treatment.

### No Privacy for the Poor

People seeking substance use treatment in Provincial Health Authority programs only provide health-related information and their treatment is kept private. Their health insurance covers the cost of their substance use health care. However, people on social assistance are usually offered treatment through regional health authorities, and there are significant differences in how their information is handled. They are required to provide non-health related information, including their social insurance numbers and social assistance information, to get treatment. Their entry into substance use treatment goes on their file with the Ministry of Poverty Reduction and Social Development and it can impact their lives on an ongoing basis. For example, when EFry seeks crisis funding for someone on social assistance who has previously sought substance use treatment, we are often asked if we think the person will use the money for drugs.

### Housing Loss

People on assistance who are approved for substance use treatment lose their monthly social assistance except for a small stipend, based on the concept that they are living elsewhere during treatment. They are not told they will lose their social assistance by entering a regional treatment



program. They usually find out as a surprise when their landlord calls to say the money has not come or they received a smaller cheque. Frequently, this results in housing loss for the person and those they share housing with, as rent must continue to be paid. That BC is also in a housing crisis and lost housing is not easily replaced, further marginalizing vulnerable people.

### No Consideration for Children

EFry operates the only treatment program in BC where a mother can bring her young children (to age six) and there is one other that accepts mothers and babies. Other than women lucky enough to be in those two programs, single mothers on social assistance trying to access treatment must find an alternate caregiver for their children, relinquish her private information, and face the possibility of surprise homeless thanks to the deduction of funding for housing. There is no consideration given for mother’s parenting roles or children’s stability and developmental needs.

### EFry’s Recommendations to Government

EFry presented the Committee with recommendations to address each of these challenges, to support women in receiving treatment that doesn’t require relinquishing their privacy, child custody, or housing.

“As a senior, I’ve done a lot of volunteering but I’ve never felt so appreciated as I have by the girls at ACCW,” says Bernice. “Many of them even called me Kookum, which means grandmother, and one even made me a beautiful scarf as a thank you.”



Longtime cardmaking program volunteer, Bernice, looks forward to being able to resume leading crafts with “the girls”.

## EFRY'S VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

### Volunteer programs in prisons permitted to resume

Supporting women in prison to maintain family connections and prepare for successful community reintegration has been at the heart of what EFry does since we were founded in 1939. COVID restrictions prevented our in-prison programs, the majority of which are delivered by volunteers, from operating for the past two years. We have just received news they can resume. EFry's Storybook Program, which connects incarcerated parents with their children through recorded readings, our recreational programs, and our art programs will all restart soon.

That's welcome news for both incarcerated women and our many dedicated volunteers, like Bernice, who shared her artistic side with women in the Alouette Correctional Centre for Women (ACCW) through the card-making program for seven years.

“As a senior, I’ve done a lot of volunteering but I’ve never felt so appreciated as I have by the girls at ACCW,” says Bernice. “Many of them even called me Kookum, which means grandmother, and one even made me a beautiful scarf as a thank you.”

Through the card-making program, women are able to create handmade pieces to send to friends and family.

“We do all kinds of occasions, but I notice their favourite ones are those that express love,” says Bernice. “I really believe the program plays a very important role in maintaining vital connections to loved ones. I can't wait to get back to it.”



## Shop Woolwerx at New Westminster Farmers' Market this summer



Calling all crafters and natural product lovers: EFry's social enterprise, Woolwerx, has a stall at the popular New Westminster Farmers' Market from July 28 through November 3. The market is held every second Thursday from 3-7pm in Tipperary Park, located at 315 Queens Avenue.

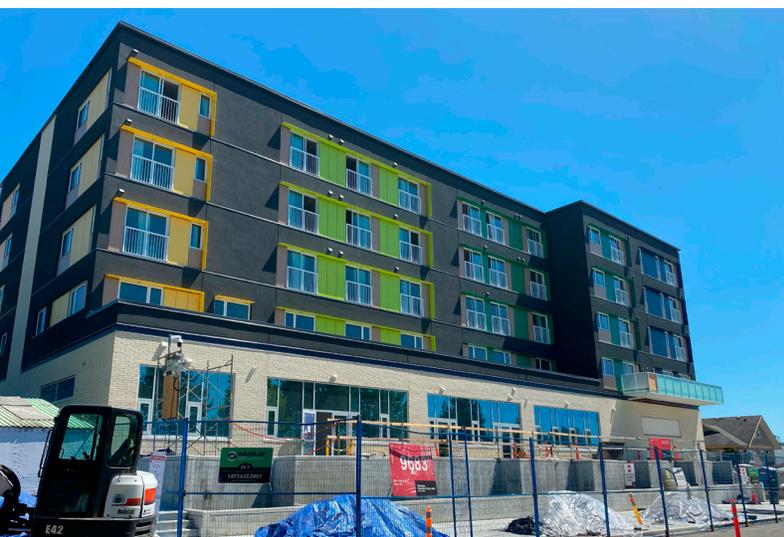
You'll find a wide array of handmade, artisanal wools and yarns, along with all natural dryer balls, and bags of nutrient-rich Wonder Wool Gardening Pellets to help keep your plants healthy and moist in the summer heat.

Can't make it on a Thursday? Wonder Wool Pellets are available at Hunters Garden Centre at 2560 West Broadway in Vancouver. Our wools and yarns can be purchased online at [woolwerx.com](http://woolwerx.com). Every purchase helps us provide women re-entering the community after incarceration with the opportunity for job training and employment.

## Join us! EFry's AGM on September 22 at our new facility

For the past several years, EFry has been working to bring our innovative new facility for women and children to life. It's nearing completion and we're excited to host this year's AGM in our wonderful new space on 137<sup>th</sup> Avenue in Surrey, just down the street from Surrey Memorial Hospital. This five-storey, 57,000 square foot building will bring together shelters, ultra-affordable apartments, programs and a truly innovative multidisciplinary health centre.

More details will be shared in the coming weeks. We hope you will be able to join us for the AGM and a tour of highlights from the new space, which could not have happened without the generosity and support of our donors. Email us at [info@elizabethfry.com](mailto:info@elizabethfry.com) to ensure you receive your invitation.



Our new facility for women and children is nearly complete. We look forward to welcoming you there for our upcoming AGM.

## THANK YOU

We are so grateful to you for making all these initiatives happen which drives our ability to transform and protect the lives of our women and children we serve – thank you for all that you do. We wish you a happy and safe summer.

With gratitude,  
Team EFry



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