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An Insight into Grind Operations

Summer 2023

coffee break

From the editor >>>

Welcome to the Grind’s third newsletter

Welcome to the third issue of **Coffee Break**, a newsletter to help keep our community informed about activities and services offered by The Grind Pembroke from its facilities in Pembroke, Ontario.

The Grind is in a celebratory mode! Having survived a tumultuous two years, during which time the organization’s operations moved from downtown Pembroke and struggled to maintain essential services to the community’s at-risk population while extensive renovations were underway at its new location, The Grind is finally in a position to focus its attention on full service delivery.

This issue focusses on the near-miraculous efforts required to get to this point, and what services The Grind is now able to provide to clients from its spectacular new facility – a facility that provides more appropriate, professional space and amenities.

Congratulations to all those responsible for an excellent job completed!

Grind’s new facility officially opens!

Major government grants critical to effort

The Grind Pembroke’s Board of Directors, staff, volunteers and clients were joined by community leaders on November 19, 2021, to officially dedicate the organization’s newly renovated facility on Victoria Street that once housed Pembroke’s original fire hall.

The effort to create appropriate operational space within the cavernous former fire hall was, to say the least, a monumental undertaking.

Aside from the struggles to find the necessary financial and human skills’ resources, Grind staff and volunteers had to “think outside the box” to provide essential services from another community location while environmental and engineering studies progressed to allow construction to begin in stages



as funding was secured.

The move to the new location was made possible by the offer of a long-term lease from the City of Pembroke. Led by a board sub-committee, guided by the Grind’s now board chair, Deacon Adrien Chaput, and executive-director, Jerry Novack, the renovations’ project was successful in securing close to \$700,000 in federal and provincial grants required to complete the work. Once all of the required inspections were completed by city officials and the Health Unit, (cont)

New facility con't >>>

... the facility opened for business early this year.

Government grants received included those from Ontario's Trillium Fund, and two at the federal level administered by the United Way of Simcoe-Muskoka – one related to homelessness and another that has enabled The Grind to provide wheelchair accessibility. In addition, several large donations were received from community organizations, including the Grey Sisters of the Immaculate Conception and Calvary Baptist Church of Pembroke.

"We are excited to finally occupy a facility that will enable our staff and volunteers to better serve the needs of our growing clientele base," said Grind executive director, Jerry Novack. "Despite the delays we encountered over the past two years in completing the renovations to our new space, we were able to maintain minimum services thanks to a wonderful partnership with The Society of St. Vincent de Paul. This partnership allowed us to maintain a lunch take-

out service from the kitchen facility of St. Columbkille Cathedral. We thank them for graciously hosting us despite the fact that it was in the middle of the worst part of the COVID-19 pandemic."

The Grind's new facility at 273 Victoria Avenue, Pembroke, Ontario, provides space for the following services: (1) modern Community Kitchen with a walk-in food cooler and commercial freezer units and dry/canned food storage and inspection area; 100-seat capacity Coffee House and food serving counters with stage and audio-visual service; men's/women's/family washrooms; shower/change room; janitor's closet; laundry facility; Administrative Services' office space; and expanded Client Service's office/interview space with clinical space for visiting primary care providers.

For further details on The Grind Pembroke's services, please consult our updated website at:

[The Grind Pembroke](#)

A big 'Thank You' to our volunteers and staff for staying the course!

The recent – but not easily forgotten – health crisis posed by the COVID-19 pandemic certainly took a toll on our vulnerable client population.

And to make matters worse, it all happened on and around the time The Grind had to vacate its original downtown Pembroke location and during a lengthy, almost two-year renovation of the organization's new facility built within the City of Pembroke's old fire hall.

But our loyal staff and volunteers saved the day by overcoming the dislocation to maintain minimum food and client services in a cheerful, positive and professional manner. We are indebted to all of them in keeping our organization's primary goals front and centre – compassionate, respectful and friendly service to our clients.

Community Kitchen opened

The Grind Pembroke's original food service consisted of a hot or cold beverage and a sweet treat delivered in the Coffee House.

Then in early 2019, with the sudden closure of the Salvation Army's much used Soup Kitchen, The Grind, with support of area faith community and business organizations, launched a basic but limited food service the very next day! This service, which ran into the COVID pandemic, offered breakfasts and a bag lunch. But it was limited due to lack of a proper kitchen set-up and a reliance on electric pans. Service, as well, was on a take-out basis only.

This limitation is history since The Grind has relocated and has been able to open a modern, commercial kitchen. The facility is able to prepare and serve a variety of hot and cold dishes as required.



Thanks to our new community kitchen, and our excellent food services' coordinator and cook, Leann Rollins, aided by a group of dedicated volunteer kitchen helpers, we are now providing nutritious lunches from Tuesday to Friday to complement the Saturday – Monday lunch service offered by the Society of St. Vincent de Paul at St. Columbkille Cathedral.

Client Services

In early 2016, with The Grind's Coffee House only a few months old, it became apparent that many community members visiting the facility needed more than a friendly smile and a cup of coffee.



The Grind's new Client Services Office now open.

Once Grind volunteers succeeded in building relationships and trust, many visiting clientele began sharing details of their lives and asking for help with the issues they were facing. Our volunteers, most of whom were seniors, had little to no social service experience or expertise that could be called upon to help. And certainly, a coffee house environment offered no suitable space within which to undertake any confidential conversations.

Ultimately, with the assistance of student volunteers from Algonquin College's Social Service Worker Program, The Grind was able to open up a small Client Services' Office in 2017 in available space adjacent to its former downtown Pembroke coffee house location.

The goal of the service was to provide a basic assessment of a client's needs and to refer the client to appropriate local professional services. We refer to our response to the need as "system navigation". The issues expressed by clients ranged from basic food, clothing and housing needs to more complex ones related to mental and physical health, addictions, lack of finances and unemployment.

Over the following couple of years, the demand for client services increased and so did the need for additional and more appropriate space. This situation contributed to The Grind's decision to seek, and ultimately secure, better and larger space in a new location.

The Grind's new Client Services Office, adjacent to its recently opened and expanded Coffee House, is open for business. The facility is equipped with electronic surveillance and safety features, provides two confidential interview rooms; an outer reception area with a small waiting room; a staff kitchenette; and additional

space for eventual client outreach activities once administrative services can be relocated to a refurbished second level office suite.

The Grind welcomes new Client Services' staff – Chantal Gauthier – Supervisor, and Marina Neville – Coordinator, both graduates of Algonquin College's Social Services Worker Program.

Client service stats

The year 2022 was a busy one for Client Services. Here are a few highlights:

- 3,153 in-coming service calls;
- 1,555 walk-in clients
- 153 mental health referrals
- 106 Ontario Works referrals
- 219 "other" agency referrals
- 168 food bank referrals
- 58 Ontario Disability referrals

Critical community partnerships

The complexity and volume of demand for client services requires The Grind to partner with local social service agencies for support. The Grind facility provides a convenient hub within which such professional services can be effectively delivered to clients in need.

The Grind is grateful to have a strong in-house partnership with counsellors from Mental Health Services of Renfrew County and Ontario Works. Additional community resources, on an as-required basis, are provided by Addiction Treatment Services of Renfrew County, the Paramedic Services of Renfrew County, the Renfrew County District Health Unit, and Ontario Provincial Police.

We recently acquired the services of a physician from Pembroke Regional Hospital who serves registered Grind homeless clients on a once-weekly basis.



Grind staff & volunteers worked tirelessly during COVID-19 to serve our at-risk community members, often at risk to themselves. Kudos to all from The Grind Board.

Expanded space

Coffee House open for business

The Grind's signature service, and where initial client interaction generally starts, is centred in its fully operational Coffee House. Expanded space at its new location offers more and better opportunities to serve clients' social and information needs.

The new facility boasts expanded food and beverage serving, storage and display surface areas, and increased seating capacity. The serving counters are strategically located with access to the kitchen and commercial dish washer, walk-in cooler, commercial freezers, bulk (dry and canned) food storage area, and a washer/dryer.

The Coffee House space was originally home to two large fire truck bays. In addition to tables and seating for 50 people, the area can accommodate a banquet-type setting using

folding tables for community dinner purposes.

A stage with accompanying audio-visual equipment and lighting allows for public information sessions, client entertainment activities, organizational meetings and client outreach activities.

Patrons of the Coffee House have access to adjacent public washrooms (male, female and family), and for the benefit of our homeless population, a shower/change room. All main doors of the facility, including washrooms, are accessible.

The Coffee House is operated by a group of volunteers, supervised by Marlyn Sauk. The facility is open Tuesday – Friday from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., and at other times for special events. Assisting clients in this facility is Steve Prendergast, Field Operations & Client Support.



Who runs the show? >>>

Our volunteer Board of Directors provides policy oversight and guidance. The Board is currently led by chairperson, Deacon Adrien Chaput.

Reporting to the Board is Executive Director, Jerry Novack, who is responsible for day-to-day operations and enforcing Board policies. Currently, this is a volunteer position.

Our Executive Director is assisted by Office Manager, Tina Spurrell (salaried) and supporting volunteers: Clerical Assistant & Volunteer Coordinator, Carolyn Henderson; Finance Clerk (interim), David Studham; and Janitor, Neil Melancon.

Meet our Board Members & CEO 2023-2024



(front row, l-r)

Deacon Adrien Chaput, Chair
Pastor John Vaudry, Secretary
Jerry Novack, Executive Director

(back row, l-r)

Pastor Dave Henderson, Director
Corie Kranz, Director
Amelia Kennedy, Director



Save the Date!

**Support The Grind's Major
Fundraiser to Help Those At-Risk
in our Community**

Saturday, 2024 Feb. 24th

**Register On-Line this Fall
cnoy.org/location/pembroke**

In the next issue >>>

*Housing the homeless - challenges
Meeting basic needs of the homeless
Connecting the homeless to health
services*

CNOY 2024 fundraising results

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