



Alpha Court

alphabits newsletter



Community Mental Health & Addiction Services

SPRING 2023

Message From the Executive Director



Welcome to Spring, a time of new beginnings and renewed growth. As such, this is an opportune time to introduce our revitalized newsletter. Alpha court will be publishing a newsletter twice a year, Spring and Fall.

We are very excited to be launching this and it is our hope the newsletter will keep our valued clients, partners, staff and the community informed of our Organization and the work we are doing in providing individualized, recovery-

orientated support and housing for people who experience mental health or addiction challenges in the City of Thunder Bay.

Publications will also include creative ways the Organization continuously promotes its core values of respect, dignity, hope and wellness for the people we serve and staff.

In addition to the Newsletter, you can find out information on Alpha Court by visiting our website at alphacourt.ca and checking us out on Facebook.

We look forward to sharing our news with you and appreciate the time you are taking to learn more about us. 💡

Nicole Latour

Employee Recognition

Congratulations to the following employees for their long-term and dedicated service:

15-Year Milestone

Aliyah Agha-Dunn
Jennifer Lavoie
Joleen Ridler
Gene Wazinski

20-Year Milestone

Margie Cholin
Nicole Latour

25-Year Milestone

Jennifer Sportak

30-Year Milestone

Lynn Nahachewsky
Barb Lovie

Alpha Court Events

For several years, Alpha Court has promoted wellness activities for employees. The purpose is to promote wellness within the Agency by engaging in various activities that meet the physical, social, mental and spiritual needs and interests of all staff. Several staff members have formed a Wellness Committee to ensure staff wellness activities are planned and implemented. Some activities have included: bowling, hiking/walks; snowshoeing; volunteering; lunches; pedometer challenges; activity bingo; mini putt and pet therapy week. The committee also plans activities to acknowledge Awareness Days such as: Anti-Bullying Day; Mental Health Week and Orange T-Shirt Day to name a few. 💡

Pink T-Shirt Day



Pink Shirt Day falls on the last Wednesday of February every year. This anti-bullying

day was formed to raise awareness about the prevention of bullying and to promote kindness and inclusion

Bullying can have long-standing effects; such as, feelings of sadness, loneliness and isolation, Increased stress levels, poor sleeping and eating patterns. It can also lead to increased risk for developing mental and physical health complications.

The employees of Alpha Court take a stand against bullying. Through continued education and development, we strive to promote an inclusive workplace. 💡



Client Luncheon

The staff of Alpha Court got together on January 26th to host a lunch for the people we serve at the Oliver Road Recreation Centre. It was so nice to get together after the long period of isolation and avoiding gatherings. Good company and good food enjoyed by all. Keep posted for more events to come. 💡

Alpha Court Bits and Pieces

Mental illness indirectly affects all Canadians at some time either through their own experience, or that of a family member, friend or colleague. In any given year, 1 in 5 people in Canada will personally experience a mental health problem or illness. By age 40, about 50% of the population will have or have had a mental illness.

Despite this, negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who are experiencing mental illness are common. Alpha Court envisions a society where all individuals who experience mental health or addiction challenges can reach their full potential. We need to continue working at eliminating the stigma that people face when experiencing a mental illness “In a world where you can be anything, BE KIND” (Jennifer Dukes Lee). 💡

IN A WORLD
WHERE YOU
CAN BE
ANYTHING
BE KIND



Joe's story

I was involved in a lifestyle that was not healthy and I was making the wrong choices; my self-esteem was not good. I couldn't do the simple things in life without getting mad and yelling in frustration.

After a surgery that my Alpha Court worker, Ken, supported me through, I saw that there were people who do care and believe in me. I was supported by Ken to supervised visits with my daughter and I have been able to build a relationship with her.

I went through the supported work program at March of Dimes and I had an opportunity for short-term employment. I took the job and after a week they asked if I wanted to work full time. I jumped at the offer and have not looked back. I was asked to be the safety rep for my employer and most recently got my forklift ticket. I have been able to go off of ODSP and now rely solely on employment income.

Joe, we wish you all the best in your career! 💡

Program Highlights

Rapid Response System Navigation

Rapid Response System Navigation would like to introduce the newest team member – Kristine (*with a “K”*) Wilson. Kristine will be doing the position of Release from Custody Indigenous Program.

Rapid Response System Navigation supports individuals with immediate short-term case management; individuals being released from custody, community, and in conflict with the law.

The staff utilize a range of intervention strategies to help integrate client within the community, advocate for informal and formal community resources, and referrals to community agencies where appropriate.

You can contact Alpha Court at 807-683-8200 and ask for Jennifer LaVoie, Joleen Ridler, or Kristine Wilson with any inquiries regarding our services and programs. 💡



Day Centre Boxing Program

The Alpha Court Day Centre has been a staple in the Windsor, Picton and Blucher areas since 2011. We have proudly provided a number of educational, expressive, and recreational programs to individuals with Mental health and Addiction challenges in the city of Thunder Bay.



One of our specific specialties at the Day Centre is our Boxing Program. The program is instructed by Jesse James who has been a Day Centre Facilitator since 2011. Jesse has a long history of competing internationally in boxing and kickboxing, holding a world title in 2007. The Boxing Program is tailored to all skill levels, abilities, and experience. This is a non-contact, physically active program that lays the foundations of boxing fundamentals; such as, footwork, defensive positioning, how to properly throw a punch, and even the mental aspect that needs to be considered when defending yourself. Jesse is very mindful of client safety, and encourages participants to work hard but is always careful to find the line between hard work and over exertion. Our ultimate goal in the Boxing program is to make everyone feel welcome on their journey to increase their physical fitness and mental well-being. If you or someone you know is interested in participating in the Boxing Program or the Day Centre. Please inquire with Jesse James or Sharon Greshuk @ (807) 683-7729. 💡



Ooshke Bemahdesewin

Ooshke Bemahdesewin is an Indigenous program with Alpha Court that provides a cultural component for case management service. The program offers a wide variety of traditional programming to the people we serve; such as; Aboriginal Arts and Crafts, Bannock and Tea Social, Drum Circle, Medicine Picking, Cultural Outings and Teachings.

Participants in the Aboriginal Arts and Crafts program have learned to make beaded moccasins, mittens, medicine bags, smudge bags, dream catchers, key chain rings, beaded earrings, bracelets and necklaces, to name a few. The program is held every second Monday at the Day Centre from 2-4 pm. Check out the Day Centre calendar for dates. Everyone is welcomed to attend. Come out and socialize and learn new skills. Meet our staff, Jen Sportak, Yvonne Pierre, Natalie Stobert and Program Manager Maureen Colpitts.

Eagle Feather Teaching

The Eagle is our most sacred of birds because the Eagle carries our prayers to the Creator and is therefore heard. The Eagle feather is the most sacred and honoured gift given to an individual. When a feather falls to the earth, it is believed to carry all of the bird's energy, and it is perceived as a gift. Feathers may arrive unexpectedly but not without a purpose. The care and responsibility that comes with carrying an Eagle feather must be taught. 🕊





YOUR OPINION MATTERS

As Mark Twain once said, “continuous Improvement is Better than delayed perfection”. At Alpha Court, we have a Quality Improvement Team that focuses on continuous improvement. Our goal is to gather feedback, using various methods, on our services and other various aspects of our Organization. Using this feedback, we develop strategies to continue to do what we are doing well and make improvements where they are needed. One of the ways we gather information is through the Ontario Perception of Care Tool (OPOC). During the months of April and May, we will be undertaking our 2023 OPOC campaign and Dease and Jasper Tenant Surveys. Stay tuned for highlights from these surveys in our Fall Newsletter. 💡

Walk-in / Call-in Services

Alpha Court offers walk-in or call in services on Monday, Wednesday and Friday afternoons from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm. Services available at our walk-in and call-in include Information on mental health services, addiction services, housing, employment and financial supports, assistance with appropriate referrals, and how to connect with the Alpha Court Day Centre. Please note, this service does not include talk therapy. 💡

258 
walk-in/call-in
contacts made over the last year

“Volunteers don’t get paid, not because they’re worthless, but because they’re priceless.” – Sherry Anderson



Alpha Court operates a Day Centre for people with a mental illness and/or addiction.


We offer a variety of recreational and psycho-educational programming. If you would like to dedicate time and expertise to assisting people struggling with mental illness and or addictions improve their quality of life, the Day Centre offers volunteer opportunities. We are looking for people to assist with facilitating programs, making a hot lunch and sharing their talents. Students needing practical experience often take advantage of this opportunity. Volunteers are required to have a clear criminal reference check. For more information on volunteering, please contact: Sharon Greshuk, at 683-7729 or email: sgreshuk@alphacourt.ca 💡

Did you know Cannabis can interact with Prescribed Medications?

Cannabis is natural and generally considered to be safe, and is legal for medical and recreational use in Canada. CBD, or cannabidiol, and terpenes are two constituents in cannabis that help those seeking relief from discomfort associated with pain and inflammation. Unlike THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, that causes the 'high' often associated with cannabis, CBD and terpenes can nonetheless interfere with prescribed medications, supplements and vitamins, and even natural health products.

In some, CBD may cause drowsiness, lightheadedness, nausea, diarrhea, dry mouth, and even damage to the liver. Taking CBD with other medications that have similar side effects may increase the risk of unwanted symptoms. Further, many drugs are broken down by enzymes in the liver. CBD may compete for or interfere with these enzymes – with over 100 medications identified that may be affected by cannabinoids.

For example, the diabetes drug metformin and certain heartburn medications may increase risk of diarrhea if taken with CBD. Crucially, 57 medications have been identified by Penn State University that can be dangerous if combined with cannabinoids.

It's important to discuss any cannabis use with a clinical pharmacist or doctor – whether CBD or THC, medical or recreational, smoked or used topically. The clinical pharmacists at The Health Depot can review your current medication therapies and cannabis use to maximize your comfort and to ensure your safety. 

Book a free consultation with The Health Depot today by calling 1-855-844-2242 or visiting thehealthdepot.ca/pages/oacao

SOURCES

[CBD and other medications: Proceed with caution - Harvard Health](#)

[NTI-Meds-to-be-Closely-Monitored-when-Co-Administered-with-Cannabinoids 2020_04_25.pdf \(bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com\)](#)





May is the month we bring awareness to mental health:

Mental Health Week – May 1st to 7th

National Child and Youth Mental Health Day – May 7th

World Schizophrenia and Psychosis Day – May 24th

The month of May is crucial to bringing an issue that has been in the dark for far too long into the light. We need to continue talking about mental health and seeing it as paramount to our overall wellness. Our mental health is just as important as our physical health. As Michelle Obama stated, “We would never tell someone with a broken leg that they should stop wallowing and get it together. We don’t consider taking medication for an ear infection something to be ashamed of. We shouldn’t treat mental health conditions any differently”.

Talking about mental health reduces the stigma around a traditionally taboo topic. Reducing stigma assists people to discuss their experiences and seek the help they need. We all have mental health and we need to do things to take care of ourselves.

To acknowledge mental health month, the staff at Alpha Court encourage you to do something each day in the month of May that makes you feel good about yourself and will nurture your mental health. We also encourage you to listen to or read about a person’s personal journey toward mental wellness. 