



Annual Report

2024

GUARDIANS FOR RECOVERY CORPORATION

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*“Life doesn’t get easier, better,
fairer or happier.*

*Instead, we get wiser, stronger,
and more resilient.*

*And in this rich pattern of life
and all its experiences,
we come to answer life’s most
profound questions*

*Who am I as a person of
contribution?
and
How will I make a difference?*

-Tina Olivero



RALLY FOR CHANGE

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2023

THE WEEKENDER WEEKLY

PAGE 7

Ben's Benefit urges action for addiction care

By Kaymie White
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

ST. JOHN'S — Tina Olivero is turning her family's tragedy into something meaningful to help the thousands of families who struggle with similar circumstances. After a seven-year battle with his mental health and substance abuse, Ben, Olivero's son, passed away.

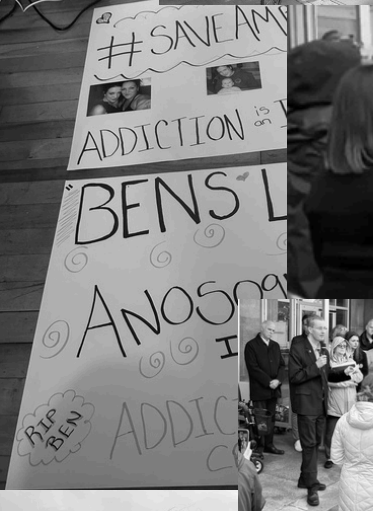
"Ben was a beautiful, wise soul. He was six foot six. We called him Gentle Giant, and he was very old soul with a purpose far beyond what I had ever envisioned for his life, and while Ben's death has been devastating, it's become a huge catalyst for change," said Olivero. "Speaking to the hearts of many people across the province with mental health and addictions, it's almost like we popped a bubble and made the conversation of mental health and addictions one that is truthful and

that Ben didn't have, trying to make change for the loopholes in the system and trying to be there for other parents who are going through this tragedy. Because I don't think until you live through it, you have no idea what it's like to watch your child slowly die in front of your eyes and not be able to do anything about it. It was frustrating, infuriating, sad, devastating, stressful, took a toll on my body. It was unbelievable. The story of what parents have to go through has still to be told."

Ben's struggles lasted for almost a decade. "We have mental health issues in our family, bipolar. So the moment that he smoked weed, it unlocked almost like a bipolar (effect) in Ben's brain. And he had no cause and effect, and he had no ability to see that he was even sick, which is called anosognosia, and that's prevalent in 80 per cent of people with



Above: Tina Olivero with her son, Ben, in happier times. Below: Tina Olivero works to help other families going through similar situations. — Submitted photos



RALLY FOR CHANGE



WE ALL NEED A LITTLE MORE FUN AND HAPPY TIMES



YOU ARE WARMLY INVITED FOR COOKIES AND COFFEE



Table of Contents

06	Letter from Founder and CEO
07	Identity & Non-Profit Incorporation
08	Charity Status and Good Governance
09	Guardians Volunteers: The Heart of Our Mission
10	Building a Strong and Board of Directors
11	The Vision and Mission
12	Advocacy and Lobbying for Systemic Change
13	Guardians of Recovery Facebook Group





- 14** | Helping Individuals and Families
- 15** | Network of Professionals and Thought Leadership
- 16** | Sunday Support Groups
- 17** | Ben's Benefit - A Powerful Recovery Event
- 18** | Guardians of Recovery Podcast
- 19** | The Recovery Magazine
- 20** | Media Advocacy
- 21** | Sober Living Homes Government Proposal

Letter from Founder and CEO Tina Olivero, Guardians of Recovery

Dear Donors, Sobriety Supporters, Volunteers, Government Officials, and Friends of Recovery:

Building a recovery revolution is deeply personal for me. This year's efforts at Guardians Of Recovery are in honor of my son, Ben Olivero, and all the other kids who have lost their lives to addiction and the illicit drug epidemic. Their stories are why we are committed to pushing for change—to create a world where future generations don't have to suffer in the same way.

As we continue to raise awareness and fight for change, it is clear that our work is not just about the individuals we directly help. It is about healing our families, our communities, and our entire country. The addiction crisis has touched us all, but so too has the transformative power of recovery.

Through your involvement, you are helping to create a ripple effect that is changing lives and shifting the narrative around addiction—one that emphasizes recovery, hope, and the possibility of a better tomorrow.

As we reflect on the year gone by, I am filled with immense gratitude and hope. Thanks to your unwavering support—whether through your financial contributions, volunteer hours, or advocacy—Guardians of Recovery has made a lasting impact on individuals, families, and communities across our country. Together, we have achieved extraordinary things, and none of it would have been possible without your commitment to this mission.

In the past year, we have successfully hosted weekly Sunday support groups, both in person and online, providing a safe space for individuals and families affected by addiction to get help. We have amplified critical voices on our Guardians of Recovery Podcast, exploring stories of resilience and hope, and fostering meaningful dialogue around systemic reform. Through our advocacy efforts, we have lobbied for essential changes in legislation and policy, pushing for better recovery resources, more accessible sober living solutions, and healthcare that prioritizes long-term recovery over temporary fixes. We still have a long way to go, but we are getting there.

Our media advocacy, through interviews and press coverage, has brought much-needed attention to the overdose crisis, and our annual Ben's Benefit event has become a powerful platform for community healing through music, art, and education. Additionally, we are thrilled to be on track to secure our charitable status by 2025, further strengthening our ability to serve the recovery community nationwide.

Your continued support is vital as we push forward to make recovery a reality for more families in Newfoundland and Labrador and across Canada.

Thank you once again for standing with us and making this critical work possible.

Together, we are part of something truly powerful—The Recovery Revolution.

With our kids in mind,

Tina Olivero
Founder, Guardians of Recovery



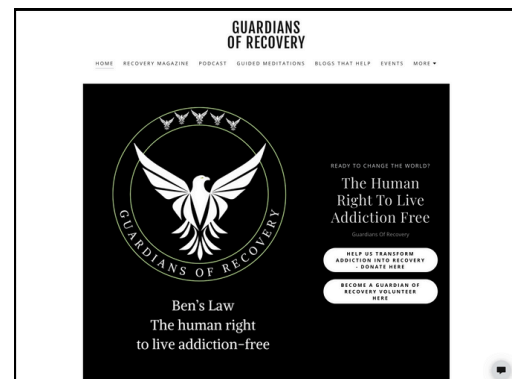
GUARDIANS FOR RECOVERY CORPORATION

Identity & Non-Profit Incorporation

In September 2023, Guardians of Recovery was born, and with it, a powerful brand was created to represent our mission of healing and hope. At the heart of our identity is our logo, featuring the symbolic image of a mother bird and her chicks—a representation of motherhood, family, and the unbreakable bond that holds us together. This symbol embodies the strength, compassion, and support that form the foundation of our organization. Over the course of the year, we established a robust platform to reach and inspire communities across Canada. Our achievements include:

- **Website Launch:** A central hub for resources, support, and connection.
- **E-Newsletters:** Informative updates to keep our members engaged and informed.
- **Podcasts:** Meaningful conversations on recovery, addiction, and mental health to educate and empower.
- **The Recovery Magazine:** A publication dedicated to stories of resilience, recovery, and hope.
- **Non-Profit Incorporation:** Solidifying our structure to better serve families and individuals navigating the challenges of addiction and recovery.

Through these initiatives, Guardians of Recovery has laid a strong foundation to champion recovery, foster connection, and support families across the nation. Together, we are building a recovery revolution.



Charity Status and Good Governance

We've retained BIG Charity Law Firm to secure our charitable status by June 2025, ensuring the highest level of transparency and governance.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Retaining Big Charity Law Firm for Charity Status - \$10,700
- Creating a national board of directors and bylaws, as well as transparent financial models for accountability and the highest levels of transparency and good governance.

Charity Governance and Compliance Running a Charity is like any other business – full of paperwork! You're doing this because you love The Work not the legal paperwork. But, with great programming comes great responsibility – to make sure deals get done well.		
Disputes & regulatory reviews DISPUTES & REGULATORY REVIEWS Includes following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contract Disputes • Membership and governance • Regulatory, negligence and liability issues • Contract and service disputes • Regulatory and administrative disputes • And negligence (defense of actual or threatened proceedings) 	Governance We provide strategic and practical advice to Directors of Charities and Not-for-Profits on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance and risk management, including governance structures • Modernizing Membership Structures • Governance Duties • Revising Bylaws • Appointment and termination of directors • Board Policies • Due Diligence • Privacy Issues • Failures and breaches of duties by directors or officers 	Charitable trusts Providing services related to the effective creation, organization and administration of trusts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising in relation to bequests to charities • Amendments to Trust deeds • Advising in relation to charitable trust purposes • Cypres and other trust variation schemes • And advising in relation to charitable trust proceedings in court. • Advertising and marketing law, including advice regarding branding and marketing strategies
Brand, information & reputation protection Advising On: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual property use and protection • Privacy laws • Copyrights • Trademarks • Confidentiality • General commercial law including terms and conditions • Contract review and preparation 	Workplace and people issues Advice for all employment laws and advise and develop appropriate contracts and policies for all types of working arrangements, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employements • Independent Contracts • Volunteers • Dispute Resolutions • Risk and Safety • Misconduct Investigation • Human Resource Consulting • HR issues related to mergers/acquisitions/divestments 	Gifts, charitable fundraising & promotions Advising on all legal and tax aspects associated with raising funds as a charity and Not-for-Profit, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advising on gift deductibility • Reviewing Promotional Material • Advising charities, philanthropists and corporate foundations on sponsorships • Reviewing Receipts • Intellectual property licensing for promotional purposes • Advertising and marketing law, including advice regarding branding and marketing strategies.

BIG CHARITY LAW FIRMS
GOVERNANCE & COMPLIANCE

Guardians Volunteers: The Heart of Our Mission

Our community of 5,800 members and dedicated volunteers are the backbone of our work. In the last 15 months, we had over 4000 hours of volunteer time, committed to the success of the Guardians of Recovery's mission and vision.

VOLUNTEER HOURS SUMMARY:

- Tina Olivero: 2,100 volunteer hours dedicated to advocacy, direct support, media outreach, and organizational leadership in the establishment of Guardians of Recovery.

Together, we are turning grief into action and creating a recovery revolution to support individuals and families impacted by addiction. Every single day...we are not just talking about change—we are making it happen.



Building a Strong Board of Directors



Tina Olivero -
Chairperson



Earl Thiessen- Director



Sacha Fraser - Director



Julie Gould - Comptroller



Jada Costello - Director

A national board amplifies our voice and network. Our board, with members like Earl Thiessen, Executive Director of Oxford House Canada oversees 27 sober living homes in Alberta and has brought significant lived experience expertise in the addiction recovery field and provided us a foundation for success with sober recovery homes in Newfoundland and Labrador.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Assembling a board of directors with lived experience in mental health and addiction, along with industry leaders, nationwide.
- This leadership ensures we are equipped to tackle the addiction crisis with innovation and compassion.

The Vision



The Mission

GUARDIANS OF RECOVERY

We don't just talk about it, we are doing it!

At Guardians of Recovery, we are committed to transforming the landscape of addiction recovery, advocating for systemic change, and providing essential support to those affected by addiction.

Our efforts are driven by a passion for creating sustainable solutions, supporting recovery journeys, and challenging the systemic issues that hinder long-term recovery.

To create a compassionate, substance-free community where individuals in recovery can heal, grow, and thrive through holistic, long-term support, fostering hope and independence while building a healthier Newfoundland and Labrador.

The Ben Olivero Sober Loving Homes are dedicated to providing a safe and nurturing environment for individuals overcoming addiction.

Through structured programs, therapeutic support, and community connections, we aim to empower residents to achieve sustained recovery, develop essential life skills, and reintegrate into society as confident, self-sufficient individuals.

Advocacy and Lobbying for Systemic Change

We have invested significant time and resources into meeting with government officials, writing emails, hosting meetings, and organizing public advocacy efforts to support all roads leading to recovery.

Our focus has been on:

- Demanding accountability from government programs that enable addiction, rather than fostering sustainable recovery solutions.
- Proposing legislative reforms to fund and approve sober living homes in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Pushing for enhanced access to detox services, recovery programs, and long-term support.
- Reforming laws that hinder parents from supporting their addicted children effectively.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Dozens of government meetings with provincial and federal representatives.
- Letter-writing campaigns and rallying community support.
- Collaborating with healthcare providers, recovery organizations, and families across Canada.



Guardians of Recovery Facebook Group: A Community of Hope, Advocacy, and Transparency

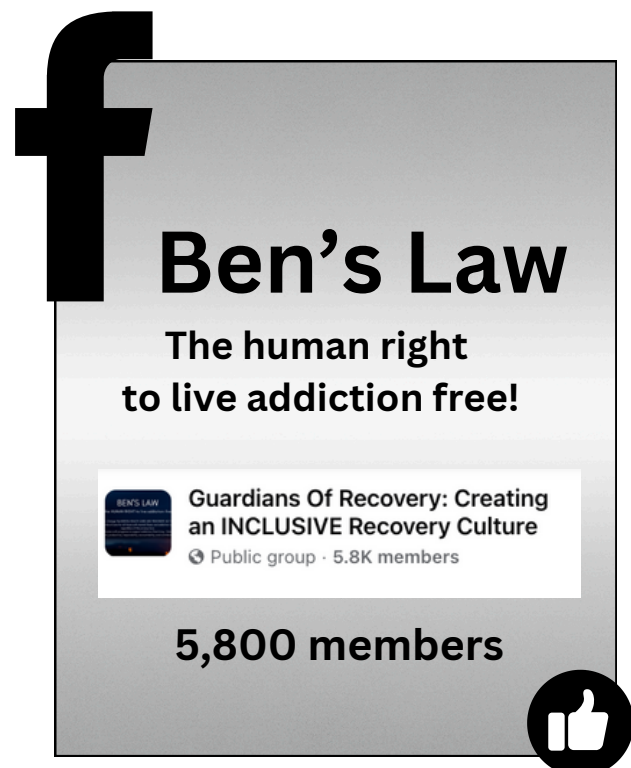
The Guardians of Recovery Facebook group has become a powerful hub for 5,800 members. It is a community of concerned citizens, advocates, and individuals committed to creating meaningful change. This group champions sober solutions, recovery homes, and sustainable long-term recovery models while fostering a transparent and supportive environment for all. With daily updates, the group promotes transparency by sharing what's truly happening in our communities—stories, challenges, and progress that often go unreported in mainstream media.

This includes:

- **Unfiltered Community News:** Updates on local events, initiatives, and developments that shed light on critical issues impacting recovery efforts.
- **Resources and Tools:** Practical guides and connections to help individuals and families navigate their recovery journeys.
- **Recovery Testimonials:** Real, inspiring stories of resilience, progress, and hope that motivate others.
- **Motivational Posts:** Daily encouragement to uplift those working toward or maintaining sobriety.
- **Programs and Events:** Information about recovery classes, workshops, and support programs available to the community.
- **Celebrating Recovery:** Highlighting individuals making strides in recovery, recognizing their successes, and inspiring others.

This group provides a transparent window into the realities of addiction and recovery—addressing topics and stories often overlooked by traditional media. It gives a voice to those impacted, celebrates recovery successes, and advocates for solutions that prioritize sustainable, long-term recovery.

By fostering connection, sharing unfiltered updates, and advocating for change, the Guardians of Recovery Facebook group empowers its members to be part of the solution—supporting individuals, families, and entire communities on the path to healing and transformation.



Direct Support: Helping Individuals and Families


We receive 2-3 calls daily, from people seeking support who are in addiction or their family members and loved ones are in that tragic battle. We offered guidance and support to individuals battling addiction and their families, ensuring they know they are not alone in this struggle.



ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:


- Navigating barriers to accessing detox and recovery programs.
- Providing emotional support for families in crisis.
- Advocating for life-saving interventions in the healthcare and legal systems.
- Supported 49 individuals in their journey to recovery and over 300 families seeking help for their loved ones.

Network of Professionals and Thought Leadership



We are creating a
RECOVERY CULTURE
for our kids and our people!

BREAKING THE CYCLE




BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ENABLING ADDICTION

I lost my son to a fentanyl overdose on the streets of downtown St. John's. That sentence still feels unreal. Like a nightmare replaying in my mind. He was caught in a system that enabled his addiction rather than helped him recover.

[To Read More Click Here](#)

INCLUSIVE RECOVERY CITIES



david best

INCLUSIVE RECOVERY CITIES - THE FUTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

Tune in to this podcast about the future of recovery, focusing on the emergence of "Inclusive Recovery Cities" worldwide. This conversation holds the potential to offer innovative solutions to the global illicit drug crisis. We will embark on a visionary conversation about inclusive recovery cities with Professor David Best who is the leader behind groundbreaking initiatives at the Centre for Addiction Recovery Research (CARR) at Leeds Trinity University.

[Click here to watch the full podcast](#)

We've established a strong network of business, legal, and healthcare professionals who are passionate about addressing the mental health and addiction crisis.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Sharing regular updates and insights via our E-News platform, featuring blogs on key topics to inspire systemic change.
- Taking addiction "out of the dark and into the light" by revealing the truth of what's happening on the ground.
- Our thought leadership inspires action, and accountability, and creates meaningful change in our communities.

NEWSLETTER DISTRIBUTION

Guardians of Recovery Monthly Newsletter currently reaches over 20,110 individuals in the government, municipalities, and business sectors of the province of Newfoundland and Labrador as well as families and individuals who are impacted by the drug epidemic and addiction.

Sunday Support Groups (In-Person & Online)

Every Sunday, Guardians of Recovery hosts both in-person and online support groups, providing a safe and supportive space for individuals and families affected by addiction. This initiative is part of our ongoing commitment to offering direct support to those navigating the challenges of addiction.

We host:

- **In-person meetings** every Sunday at The Lantern, fostering a sense of community and offering a space for open dialogue and emotional support.
- **Online Sunday Support Groups**, providing virtual options for those unable to attend in person. These groups ensure accessibility for people across the province, especially for families and individuals in more remote areas.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Facilitating weekly in-person meetings at The Lantern, St. John's
- Coordinating and moderating online support group sessions.
- Connecting individuals and families to additional resources and services to aid in their recovery journey.



**Addiction Support Group
& People with Addicted Loved Ones**
Every Sunday - 3 PM - The Lantern - Barnes Rd, St. John's, NL



Self Empowerment
ONLINE meeting every SUNDAY (Zoom Link in text above)
from 5:00 to 6:00 pm NL Time - 3:30 Eastern Time

Ben's Benefit - A Powerful Recovery Concert

Ben's Benefit has become an annual event where music and healing converge to bring attention to the drug epidemic and addiction recovery.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Covered live by NTV, provided national exposure for the event, allowing a much-needed look into the world of addiction and its community impact.
- Local musicians donate their time and talents to create a show that inspires and encourages a recovery mindset and culture.
- This event served as a platform for education, advocacy, and fundraising, bringing together families and individuals impacted by addiction.
- Our fundraising auction helped us sustain our programs to better serve the recovery community.



Guardians of Recovery Podcast

Our Guardians of Recovery Podcast amplifies stories of hope, resilience, and systemic reform, while fostering national expertise and solutions to support the reform of the illicit drug crisis.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- The podcast features experts such as Earl Thiessen, Executive Director of Oxford House Canada, oversees 27 sober homes in Alberta.
- Tackles critical topics like the dangers of enabling addiction and exploring recovery pathways.
- The podcast serves as a catalyst for public dialogue and systemic change.

Interviewing Global Leaders in Addiction & Recovery



The Recovery Magazine

The Recovery Magazine highlights stories of sobriety, transformation, and resilience, emphasizing the **"We do recovery"** narrative.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Showcasing inspiring recovery journeys and family stories on the devastating impact of addiction.
- Advocating for systemic change and highlighting innovative programs to create new solutions.
- Serving as both a beacon of hope and a call to action for policy change.



Media Advocacy

Tina Olivero has conducted 57 interviews with television and newspapers across Newfoundland and Labrador and Canada, sharing insights into the addiction crisis and advocating for change.



ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Raising awareness about the fentanyl crisis and the lack of systemic support.
- Challenging misconceptions about addiction and recovery.
- Tina says, "It's my personal goal to fix every loophole my son Ben fell through in this systemic tragedy—from inadequate medical care to being enabled in a drug culture that supports substance abuse over recovery."



Sober Living Homes Government Proposal

In response to the urgent need for long-term recovery housing, we lobbied the government. Although the Premier and Ministers have yet to approve recovery homes in our province, we remain committed to this vital cause.

ACTION ITEMS INCLUDED:

- Submitted a proposal for a 62-person sober living facility in Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Focused on structured programs including life skills, job training, and counselling.
- Important Note: This project is contingent on government funding and approvals, and we continue to advocate for its success.



