

February 15, 2010

The Diakonos Retreat Society is pleased to announce the opening of the Red Deer Diakonos House. This house is an exciting but yet at the same time a necessary addition to the Diakonos organization.

Few people will know or experience the world of hurt that Peace Officer or Emergency Services Personnel face in their day to day role of protecting our society. The trauma and stresses of an occupation that requires the highest degree of professionalism of being a Police Officer, RCMP, Peace Officers, Firefighters, Emergency Services and Military Personnel can and does take a toll on their families and themselves. The emotional detachment required to do the job in a professional manner at times spills over into personal and family relationships in a negative way. Communication breakdown is the cause of 60-80% divorce rates in emergency service vocations. This is why the Diakonos Retreat Society began in 1997 and continues to exist today.

The Diakonos Retreat Society is a non-profit charitable organization that was founded to serve and strengthen the audience it serves. Diakonos Retreat Society previously operated 2 "Diakonos" houses – one in Calgary and one in Edmonton. The opening of the Red Deer house will greatly benefit the Central Alberta audience. These residential homes are offered in a confidential manner to all Police Officers, RCMP and Peace Officers, Firefighters, Emergency Service and Military Personnel, their spouses and civilian members of these organizations. These homes are used for providing refuge during a personnel crisis of their own or until other processes can be put into place. At times there might be medical situations where overnight accommodations are necessary - particularly for those from out of town. Since the opening of the houses, there have been over 7000 nightly stays for numerous reasons. Clearly the concept of having these houses available to this audience and their families is important.

Similar to the Calgary and Edmonton House, the Red Deer Diakonos House will rely on its community for operational support. Its current operating budget is approximately \$38,000/year. The immediate objective is to get the word out to the various audiences Diakonos serves is that the Red Deer House is now open should there be a need to use it.

The second objective is to manage the financial needs to operate both short term and for years to come. To date, the communities we have houses in have been very receptive to this program and provide financial support. This is done a number of ways. Some examples include - becoming a monthly donor, holding a fund raiser or event such as a BBQ day, golf tournament, bake sale, bike a thon, etc that supports Diakonos. We will be encouraging each of the audiences that Diakonos serves to support the Red Deer House and will actively seek support from local businesses. While we currently rent the Diakonos House in Red Deer, Diakonos would like to actually own the House. Calgary was able to do this within 2 years and we hope that Red Deer would be able to achieve the same results.

We also congratulate the Team of Volunteers with the Red Deer Diakonos House! They are made up of intake workers and those who work behind the scenes to make the Red Deer House happen.

We welcome the Red Deer Diakonos House! Further information regarding Diakonos, other programs or upcoming events and that of how to use the Houses can be found at www.diakonosretreat.com

Kind Regards

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