

north shore news

LETTER: Consider the alternatives

North Shore News

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Dear editor:

For nearly 30 years the West Coast Alternatives Society operated a substance abuse treatment centre on the North Shore.

During that time we provided counselling to nearly 10,000 local residents, which included more than 500 young children, between the ages of three to 12. Most of our clients grew up in nice homes along beautiful boulevards, in what most of us would agree is one of the most liveable and caring communities on the planet.

During that time our most important referral agency was Turning Point.

In fact, when our agency was forced to close, our board of directors made a significant donation toward the building of Turning Point's women's support recovery home, the first for the North Shore. It was Turning Point's stellar reputation and outstanding leadership in the field of addiction recovery that made our board's decision a no-brainer.

In our last 15 years of operation, Alternatives was located in Delbrook Plaza, just above the Westview exit off the highway. We were located on the ground floor; directly above us were a number of privately owned condominiums. During that entire time, there was not one single incident at our facility.

Prior to Delbrook Plaza, we were located in the old Cloverley elementary on Hendry Avenue, when it had been turned into a YMCA. Our immediate neighbour just one door down the hall was a Montessori elementary school, and directly below us, a daycare centre.

Frankly, we were surprised that no one seemed to be concerned about us, but not surprised that in nearly 15 years in this location, there had not been one single complaint.

Residents in the area (being) proposed for this new facility really should consider the alternatives.

Nearly every community in the Lower Mainland — and for that matter around the province — are plagued with well-intentioned but far sub-par “recovery homes” that are in fact nothing more than flop houses. In many cases, social assistance cheques are signed over to “recovering” addicts who “manage” their clients’ money, but where regulations are not maintained, including fire and safety codes.

Turning Point is a first-class treatment facility, and if residents of the North Shore feel they deserve the best, then they should welcome them and be thankful that our fathers and sisters and daughters and mothers will be able to access help, right here on the North Shore.

Alan Podsadowski, former executive director, West Coast Alternatives Society

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