



**EMBARGOED UNTIL 4:00AM
TUESDAY, APRIL 13, 2009**

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**Coast Mental Health Announces
Third 2010 Courage To Come Back Award Recipient
MYRNA CRANMER named as recipient in SOCIAL ADVERSITY category**

VANCOUVER, B.C. April 12, 2010 – Coast Mental Health announced the third of six award recipients of a 2010 Courage To Come Back Award. **Myrna Cranmer of Vancouver** has been named as the 2010 Courage To Come Back Award recipient in the Social Adversity category. The remaining recipients will be announced over the next three Mondays, leading up to the awards gala on Thursday, May 6th.

On Myrna Cranmer's fifth birthday, she was taken by her family and placed in the infamous Alberni Indian Residential School where she remained for 10 years. It was the beginning of a nightmare for the young girl, who eventually ran away.

At 15, Myrna went to Vancouver. She landed in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside and quickly became addicted to the drugs and the lifestyle. Myrna was arrested, put in jail and had to appear in court many times in her pursuit of drugs. This continued for many years with various charges ranging from trafficking and many others involving violence.

For years Myrna's loving family watched her struggle, never knowing if they would see her again. Her sister, Valerie would go to skid row, hoping to catch a glimpse of Myrna, to make sure she was still alive. Jeannie, another sister – who nominated her for this award – recalls walking past a bar and spotting Myrna inside. She was with Myrna a few minutes before a fight broke out and Myrna ran from the bar, covered in blood.

For 27 years Myrna lived on Vancouver's streets, using drugs, going to jails and courts. In 1994, Myrna entered a detox facility, once again. After 26 days, she entered Turning Point, a recovery house. She was on hard drugs for the majority of her life and her mind and body did not know how to function without them. Clean and sober, she could not put a sentence together. She persevered and, four months later left the recovery house and went to live with her sister, Jeannie.

Starting again in midlife wasn't easy. Receiving welfare, Myrna went to Lucas Centre to finish high school and completed her GED in 1996. She then enrolled at Langara College and then the University of British Columbia. In 2001 she received a BA from UBC and in 2004, a MA in Anthropology from Simon Fraser University.

Today Myrna's life has come full circle. She is an Outreach Worker with the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre where she used to frequent as an addict. She is part of a Harm Reduction team with the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority. She has happily reconnected with her loving family and built strong bonds with her many nieces and nephews. She reaches out to women who are living the life she used to lead and doing the things she used to do. She advocates for women who have no voice and stands beside them. Most of the women know about her past but Myrna stresses, "It isn't my job to reform them. I only try to be of service to them."

Myrna is pleased to accept this Courage To Come Back Award to honour her own struggles and those of the women who she works with. "I hope that by accepting this award, women may understand if I can do it, they can, too"

Congratulations, Myrna. Coast Mental Health is proud to have you as our 2010 Social Adversity Courage To Come Back Award recipient.

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Myrna Cranmer named as recipient in CTCB Social Adversity category

Myrna will receive her Courage To Come Back Award at the 12th Annual Gala Dinner at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Vancouver on Thursday, May 6th. For tickets, call 604-675-2328 or purchase online at www.coastmentalhealth.com

About Courage To Come Back:

The Courage To Come Back Awards celebrate people who have inspired others as they have courageously battled back from illness, adversity or injury. Through Courage, British Columbians are acknowledged for their accomplishments, positive attitudes and willingness to give back to their communities. Awards are given in six categories including: addiction, medical, mental health, physical rehabilitation, social adversity and youth. Recipients are chosen by volunteer panels of community leaders and category experts.

By presenting the stories of six amazing recipients each year at The Courage To Come Back Awards, Coast Mental Health strives to offer hope to all those suffering from illness, adversity or injury and demonstrate that all people have value and dignity. At Coast, our clients with a mental illness show tremendous courage in their daily lives. In our housing facilities and service centers, a community of people strive to overcome illness, adversity and stigma, and we strive to support their recovery. Their triumphs, like those of the Courage Award recipients, motivate and inspire us.

About Coast Mental Health:

Since 1972, Coast Mental Health has been providing high-quality housing, employment programs, social opportunities and other community mental health services for people with serious and persistent mental illnesses. We know that people with a mental illness can and do recover. Our services include:

- Mental Health Resource Centre – 500 Active Members, 220 meals served daily
- Homeless Outreach program serving approximately 60 people per month
- Coast Clubhouse - 400 Members, 80 Meals Served Daily, 80 Jobs Weekly
- Community Homes – 12 Houses, Over 120 Housed in Vancouver and Burnaby
- Supported Housing - ~650 Housed
- Coast Cottages - 50 Housed
- At Home/Chez Soi - 100 Housed by 2011
- Coast Transitional Housing - 44 Housed
- PACT Employment Services - 160+ Served Annually
- Coast Social Enterprises - 20 Employed
- Financial Trust Program - 350+ Served

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