

# Highbanks

Where hope lives

## Volunteer Profile: Tracy Cody

"Tracy amazes me – she is SO organized. She has been organizing this place forever". Volunteer Patti Edwards speaks for all of us when she sings the praises of Tracy Cody.



When Highbanks first opened in 2003, we operated and staffed the Dairy Lane Restaurant on the main floor of our building. Tracy took on the job of buying groceries every week for the café. Dairy Lane was eventually leased to an outside operator, but by then Tracy was "hooked" on the weekly contact with the young girls and our volunteers.

After a short break to take care of her ailing father, Tracy returned to Highbanks to organize our new Toy Lending Library. This service offers the young families access to a variety of educational toys. In order to make the toys easily accessible to the busy moms, Tracy often comes to evening meetings or chat groups, to open the library for a book and toy exchange. While she's here, she usually takes care of some

of the children, so that the moms can focus on the evening activity. She gets to know the moms and their children, and is there to listen when a young girl needs a friend. Her experience as a mom makes her an empathetic mentor.

Tracy's family has also contributed their time and talents to Highbanks. Husband Bruce has volunteered as a handyman and casino helper. Their 21 year old son, Jarret, spent a couple of fun-filled evenings teaching the residents hip-hop dancing. Daughter Lauren used to help on the grocery runs, and the whole family participated in Feed the Hungry with a group of Highbanks volunteers and residents, to provide a meal for the homeless in the inner city.

Tracy remembers the birthdays of every volunteer, mom and child at Highbanks, and shops for gifts, cards and cakes for appreciative recipients.

Tuesdays are "volunteer day" at Highbanks. Tracy is always here, cleaning, organizing, and helping out wherever she is needed. Efficient, cheerful, and always ready with an interesting story, she is an indispensable member of the volunteer group – someone we love to have around!

### "CHATT night" at Highbanks

Highbanks residents have just completed a very successful 5 week workshop on self-esteem. Our residents got together with the girls from Elizabeth House and facilitator Kelly to discuss topics such as body image, self-talk, communication, and relationships. The most important thing learned - 'take care of you'.

### Thank you, Neighbours!

We are continually amazed at the warm welcome and support that West Hillhurst community gives to Highbanks. Last month, the Queen Elizabeth Elementary Program Enhancement Society donated \$2000 of their recent casino proceeds to the Highbanks Savings Match Program. Our Savings Match program is an incentive for our residents to save towards their post-secondary education. Highbanks Society matches their deposits up to \$1500 per resident per year.

It means so much to us that families in our neighbourhood give such tangible encouragement to our residents.

## Paying it Forward

In an inspiring example of "pay it forward" Highbanks resident Sheena decided to do something to help young mothers half-way around the world. Sheena attended a Global Youth Assembly last summer, and was moved to do something concrete to help the Young Peace Brigades project in Kramokrom, Ghana. This project focuses on providing employable skills to young female school dropouts, especially single mothers. The emphasis is on education. The organization has already started a bread-baking program and is building a skill training centre where young women can learn dressmaking and African fibre arts.

Sheena put on a garage sale at Highbanks in September. With just a few weeks to get organized, she gathered salable items from friends and volunteers, and set up in the Highbanks common room. The one-day sale raised \$500 for the Window of Hope – Employment Training Centre.

Well done, Sheena!

## Moveable Feast

Who doesn't want to come home to a warm, home-cooked meal at the end of a long day?

Every second Tuesday, our volunteers, led by Fran Genereux, PHEC, prepare a full meal for the residents – a nutritious casserole, buns, salad, and a fruit dessert, individually packaged so that the girls can take them home, reheat and enjoy. The cost - \$5/family!

Since the programs inception in late October, the girls have tried beef stew, tuna casserole, chicken and broccoli casserole and quiche. The meal comes with reheating and serving suggestions, as well as copies of the recipes.

The response has been enthusiastic. Even the moms who have moved into our second housing option a few blocks away, come back for Tuesday Treats!



## Soroptimist Santas!

For the fifth year in a row, Soroptimist International Calgary will shower our residents with hampers overflowing with Christmas gifts for mom and child. The young mothers have submitted "Wish Lists" and these generous women do all they can to make their wishes come true! This year the baskets will focus on "Health and Wellness" and may contain toys for the child, clothes or household items for the mom, Christmas stockings, grocery vouchers, and treats – all chosen with that family in mind. Residents are always delighted to have these wonderful gifts to open Christmas morning.



## Highbanks partners with Artemis Foundation - Gallery Calorie!



Off with the golf shoes ...on with the walking shoes! Highbanks has been chosen as the recipient of next springs **Gallery Calorie** - an annual fundraiser put on by the Artemis Foundation showcasing some of Calgary's finest restaurants and art galleries, through a self-guided tour.

Sample food and drinks while browsing the galleries on 17th Avenue during the day, then party under the stars in Tomkins Park, with live entertainment, a silent auction, the Art Race, and dancing to a live band. The best part - Highbanks is the lucky recipient of the proceeds from this fun event!

Look for more info to come!

**Happy holiday wishes to all our friends  
– donors, volunteers, residents, EVERYONE!  
Highbanks is blessed with the support of many, many wonderful people.  
In the words of a great philosopher:**

***Unless someone like you cares a whole awful lot,  
nothing is going to get better.  
It's not.  
Dr. Seuss***



Highbanks Independent Living for Parenting Youth Society  
[www.highbanksociety.ca](http://www.highbanksociety.ca)  
403.521.0082  
[highbanks@mac.com](mailto:highbanks@mac.com)

