

BIG CHANGES



Since its first award in 2007, Day One Society has proudly supported **62 recipients** with a total of **\$137,500 in educational funding**—helping individuals pursue training, return to school, and take meaningful steps toward long-term stability and personal success. In 2025 alone, the Society awarded \$15,000 in scholarships, including three \$2,500 awards to new recipients and five \$1,500 awards to returning students, reinforcing its enduring commitment to education as a pathway to opportunity, recovery, and community reintegration.

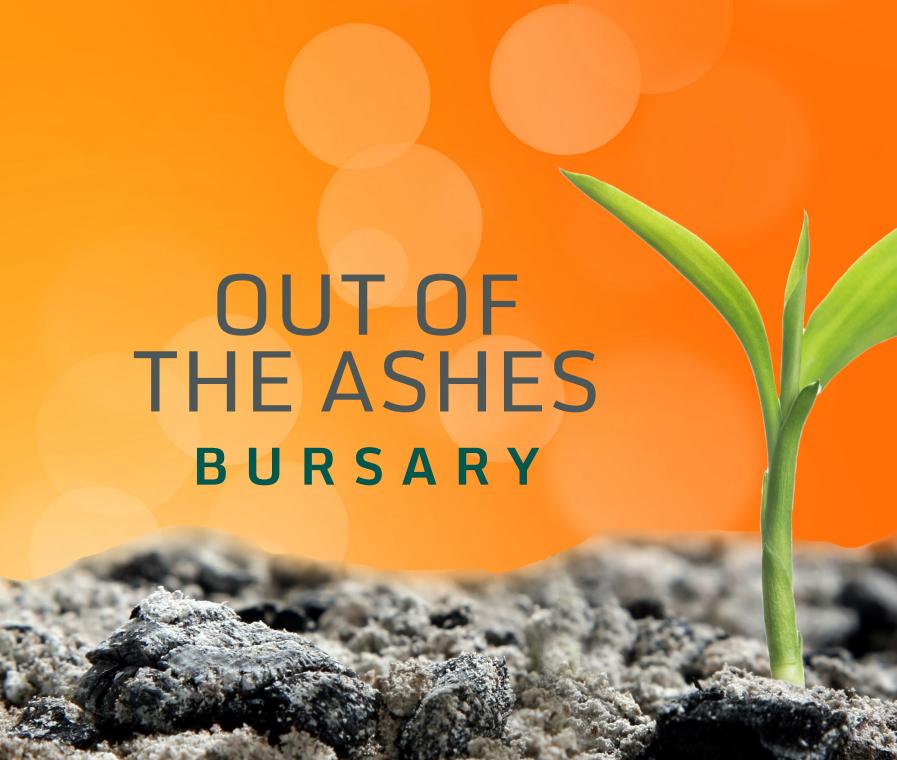
Formerly known as the Kamloops Society for Alcohol and Drug Services, **Day One Society** has served the community and region for more than five decades. What began as a grassroots response to the urgent need for addiction services has evolved into a respected, multi-service organization grounded in compassion, dignity, and evidence-based care. Guided by its enduring motto—**Help. Hope. Heal.**—the Society continues to operate the Phoenix Centre, home to its core inpatient detox program and expanded services that provide safe, age-appropriate support for both youth and adults. This evolution reflects the organization's long-standing commitment to meeting people where they are, while continuously adapting to emerging community needs.



DAY ONE
SOCIETY

A significant milestone was reached with the celebration of 50 years of service, marking both a reflection on Day One's deep roots and a bold step forward. This anniversary was commemorated with a community celebration at the Paramount Theatre, where the organization officially unveiled its new name, Day One Society—symbolizing new beginnings and the belief that recovery starts with a single step forward. As part of this event, a film produced exclusively for the organization was premiered, sharing powerful lived-experience stories of individuals who have walked the path from addiction to recovery one day at a time.

Building from this milestone, the Society introduced the **"50 Years, One Day at a Time"** campaign, which continues to share excerpts from the film and reinforce the importance of compassion, access to care, and stigma reduction surrounding substance use. Today, Day One Society remains deeply rooted in its founding values while continuously advancing its services, programs, scholarship support, youth care, and public education efforts. Through every initiative, the organization lives its promise to **Help, offer Hope, and support Healing**—for individuals, families, and the broader community.



OUT OF THE ASHES BURSARY

The Out of the Ashes Bursary was created to provide educational support to youth in Kamloops who have been in recovery for a minimum of one year. In response to growing requests from the recovery community, the bursary expanded its age criteria to better reflect the realities of addiction and recovery.

Applicants may now apply in two categories: Ages 17-29 and 30 Years and Older, ensuring that people of all stages in their recovery journey have access to educational support.

This change allows us to support more individuals as they pursue post-secondary studies and rebuild their lives through commitment, resilience, and personal growth. We are proud to celebrate every recipient who demonstrates the courage to pursue education as part of their recovery.



**OOTA Milestone:
As of 2025,
\$137,500 in bursaries
have been awarded
to 62 recipients.**

The Out of the Ashes Bursary began as a creative effort to inspire recovery and success for young people struggling with addiction. To acknowledge this bursary, one must fondly remember an extraordinary man, **Ron Kopytko**. Ron eagerly shared the passion and commitment of his wife **Leann Kopytko** to help people who struggle with substance misuse. Leann has been with Day One Society for over 20 years, as a Counsellor and now Program Supervisor. Out of the Ashes began with a small donation from six friends of Ron and Leann's who all owned small businesses in Kamloops and were eager to help to make a difference. The Society Board of Directors matched this initial donation and the first \$2500.00 bursary was awarded in 2008! **The first recipient became an Emergency Responder and many others have followed with successful careers in fields such as computer technology, social work, and nursing.** One particular recipient, Katherine McParland pursued a career in advocacy, elevating the issue of youth homelessness in BC by promoting the voices of youth with lived experience. Since 2008, with the support of many generous Kamloops citizens, Rotarians and business owners, the Out of the Ashes Bursary continues to support recipients in achieving their educational goals.

Michelle Raglin

Haley Baker (middle) with Program Supervisor and OOTA Founder Leann Kopytko (right) and Counsellor Luvanda Dagenais (left)

Celebratory cake!



Celebrating Out of the Ashes Recipients!

Past Recipient Stories: Here are some examples of students who have received support throughout the Out of the Ashes Bursary and gone on to pursue education in social work, arts, and human services.

Michelle Raglin

Awarded \$2500 in age group 30+ in the Bachelor of Arts program at Thompson Rivers University (TRU)

"I received the Out of the Ashes Bursary in August of 2022. At that time, I was about to begin the final year of my undergraduate degree. The previous three years were difficult regarding the management of my finances. I had a job at the beginning of my schooling, but my employer was less than compassionate when I wanted to reduce my hours to part-time for school, so we parted ways. Then COVID-19 happened and lockdown. I supported myself with student loans, government assistance, and limited on-campus employment.

When I received the bursary, it was such a blessing to be able to return my focus to what was important, my studies. As I write this, I am preparing to attend my graduation convocation ceremony next month. ***I have completed my undergraduate degree (BA in Philosophy), been nominated and shortlisted for valedictorian, and am planning my courses for next year (the first semester of my Master of Arts—Human Rights and Social Justice).*** I am thrilled to have been a recipient of this worthwhile award. I even wrote a paper and presented it in my Sociology class (Social Justice and Activism) this past semester. I couldn't imagine my life today when I began my recovery journey. Receiving support from strangers to achieve a goal I didn't think was a possibility has been incredibly humbling. I am forever grateful to Leann Kopytko and her late husband, Ron, for their brilliant idea, dedication, and perseverance in creating and maintaining the Out of the Ashes Bursary. I appreciate Day One Society for continuing its legacy so that someone like me can have a greater chance to pull myself up and out of addiction."

Haley Baker

Awarded \$1500 in age group 17–29 in the Social Worker certificate program at Open Learning at Thompson Rivers University (TRU)

*"I am just over a year strong in being sober. I am going back to school to do my **Social Service Worker Certificate**; and want to do my second year in Human Services. One day I want to work with people with addictions and feel it is a good way for me to give back to the community and others by sharing my strength and knowledge."*

Olympia Marra

Awarded \$1500 in age group 17–29 in the Human Services diploma program at Thompson Rivers University (TRU)

*"Now 2 years into sobriety, I am looking for the next step. For me, it's starting full-time at TRU in the **Human Service Diploma Program** which will provide me with the skills and opportunities to allow me to help others, just as others helped me in my times of need. I want to make a difference in this world and this educational program is the first step for me."*

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help
hope
heal

OOTA Alumnae

Andrea Hurst (Haugen) 2011-2015 recipient

'As a child I had wanted to grow up to become a police officer. Little did I know that my life would drastically change course when I was 20 years old. At the time I was studying criminology at SFU when a number of external stressors occurred, causing me to turn to the use of illicit substances. Soon, I dropped out of school and my life went downhill very quickly. Within two years of substance use I was addicted, homeless, a very unhealthy 90 pounds, and had lost everything. I had become someone else altogether, a menace to society and to myself. At the time I did not see it as a blessing, but I was incarcerated and given a substantial amount of time to clear the substances from my system. While incarcerated, a compassionate nurse provided care to me and looked me in the eyes with warmth and understanding. I felt so much shame and guilt for my actions while under the influence and yet this woman provided care to myself and the other women around me without stigma. This was the beginning of my journey in recovery, a simple act of kindness and compassion that helped pave a way to making healthier decisions for myself, such as attending treatment following my release from jail. When I completed my intake at the treatment center I met their nurse, and low and behold it was the same nurse I had met in jail. This woman continued to make a positive impact on my life. Following treatment on Bowen Island, I stayed within the community to continue my journey. Soon after I became pregnant with my eldest daughter, and she was and continues to be my guardian angel. It took a lot of hard work, but I continued to do what I needed to do for myself in recovery and for my daughter. In 2010 I moved back to Kamloops and wanted to take the next step in my life. I wanted to be able to provide for my daughter, but also wanted to give back to my community and help those suffering from substance abuse like the nurse that had helped me. With this goal I upgraded my courses and applied to the School of Nursing at TRU. Being a single mother at the time, attending a full class schedule and working part time on the side became a lot to take

on. It was the Out of the Ashes bursary that helped relieve some of the financial burden allowing me to focus solely on my daughter and my studies. I was a grateful recipient of the bursary every year during my four-year degree, and in 2015 I graduated with distinction with a Bachelor of Science in Nursing with the goal to work with individuals suffering from mental health and substance use disorder. This bursary means more to those receiving it than just the money, which we are so grateful for. For the bursary recipients, it's knowing that the community is banding together to decrease stigma and quite literally provide a helping hand Out of the Ashes. It still touches my heart to know that there were so many kind, hopeful, generous individuals within my community cheering me on. Today I reflect on my journey, being 14 years clean and sober and where it has led me. I have had the privilege of working as a RN in a number of roles, including: detox, various community mental health and substance use teams, and currently within correctional health services. I am now a mother of three beautiful children, I have the most supportive, loving husband, and I have a fantastic relationship with my family. My husband and I are now donors to the bursary. The Out of the Ashes bursary, the community members and the staff from Day One Society have all been fundamental to my success.'



Dayna Chapman 2017 recipient

*"My name is Dayna Chapman, I was a child who grew up in the foster system. I was an OOTA bursary recipient in 2017. The bursary bridged a gap for me as the provincial tuition waiver was not effective until I was 19. Since I've received the bursary, I have been able to go to Thompson Rivers University and graduate with a **Human Services Diploma**, and my **Bachelor of Social Work**. I am proud of this accomplishment as only 6% of youth from care are able to achieve a university degree. My vision is to ensure that youth in and from the foster care system have the supports they deserve to thrive. This bursary is essential to ensure that people have the opportunity to access post-secondary education. I know other individuals who have received the bursary, and I recognize most recipients go to university to enter into the helping profession which is giving back to the community. **Thank you, Kamloops for being a community that cares, and donating to make it possible for people to have an opportunity to achieve their dreams.**"*



Marilyn with Special Olympics participants



Acknowledging our donors is important. If you would like to make a submission for our annual OOTA Newsletter, please send a brief statement about why donating to this bursary is important to you. We would also love to include a photo of you! Please email to sian.lewis@dayonesociety.ca

Donor Highlights and Acknowledgement

We are grateful to longtime OOTA donor **Marilyn McLean**, who generously directed grant funding toward the Out of the Ashes Bursary. Marilyn received the **Thérèse Casgrain Lifelong Achievement Award**, a national honor recognizing her decades of dedicated volunteer work with the Special Olympics of British Columbia. As part of this award, she was able to choose nonprofit organizations to support—and selected the Out of the Ashes Bursary as one of them.

"In considering where to donate the money I received from the Canada Volunteer Awards, the Out of the Ashes Bursary was at the top of the list. I respect and admire the resilience, the power and fortitude to move forward that the recipients exemplify. Each and every award winner that I have met is not only working towards improving their skills, but is committed to making a difference in the lives of others. The OOTA bursary is transforming our world to be a better place one recipient at a time".

—Marilyn McLean



Leann Kopytko, program supervisor and OOTA founder (left) with Rotarian, Terri Axani (right) a lover of life, a traveler and recipient of a Distinguished Service Award from the City of Kamloops.

Thank you!

Help. Hope. Heal.

We are grateful to the **Rotary Club of Kamloops Daybreak** for their generous support of the Out of the Ashes Bursary. Rotary members have a long history of strengthening communities through meaningful service and youth-focused initiatives, values that align closely with the mission of this bursary.

Rotarian **Terri Axani**, a long-time member of the club, emphasizes the importance of giving back through purposeful work, noting that lasting change is created when people invest in the well-being of others. Through major fundraising events such as Rotary Ribfest, Lobsterfest and Crabfest, the club supports a wide range of nonprofit organizations in the region, including the Out of the Ashes Bursary.

To learn more about the Rotary Club of Kamloops Daybreak, visit their website.



Leann Kopytko



Sian Lewis

Community donations help Out of the Ashes continue empowering students in recovery, if you are interested in donating please contact us!

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