

The Villa had its official opening on **January 16, 1974 at its new location at 737 – 13 Avenue S.W.**, which was previously used by AADAC as a clinic. After 4 years of relying good will, community support and private donations, The Villa was successful in its application, and received long-term, committed government funding through AADAC. The Villa was now able to operate 20 beds in a home-like atmosphere, with a 28 day live-in program. Secured funding meant they could now employ 6 professional Staff including a cook, live-in Housemother, Nurse-Supervisor and Program Director. The new site boasted a cheery décor, bright carpets and a home-like atmosphere.

“Low-key villa quietly instills hope” read the headline in March 1974. When a woman with an addiction to alcohol needed a family who would care for her, shelter her, and guide her to continual sobriety, The Villa had its doors open to welcome her for 28 days. Some who felt the need to, could stay longer. The atmosphere was relaxed and happy, but the treatment was powerful and the staff highly trained, and the results were positive, putting women back on their feet again, and giving them the confidence to overcome their addiction.

Operating like everyone was part of a family, Villa Staff and Residents ate meals together. The program was fortunate to have physical education students lead a recreation program in a local church gymnasium with Clients a couple of days each week, and the Calgary Birth Control Association (now known as the [Centre for Sexuality](#)) conducted educational workshops at The Villa. Members of the Alumnae Association would help by taking current residents on outings. Residents ranged in aged from 18 – 72 at this time.

No matter whether the women were affluent or homeless, they craved love and understanding. *“We try to create an atmosphere of love and warmth and acceptance, so she can begin to develop trust.”* said Audry Gough, Supervisor. *“We encourage them to work toward self-growth so they can make a decision to do something about their drinking, personally, despite family problems or other environmental factors.”*



The dining room was bright and welcoming to residents



Megan Roe, Housemother and Luella Moir,
Nurse-Supervisor





The rooms were large, open, bright and cheerful

In September 1974, Renfrew Detox Centre (now known as [Renfrew Recovery Centre](#) and part of Alberta Health Services network) welcomed its first Clients, although it officially opened on **June 7, 1975** at the site of the old Renfrew Safeway Store. The Villa received Client referrals from Renfrew and Aventa continues to work closely with the agency to best support women who are in need of detox services prior to admission.

Detoxing from alcohol or alcohol combined with certain drugs can be life-threatening, so it is important for those who individuals to seek medical assistance. Renfrew Recovery Centre provides a structured environment to support those withdrawing from alcohol and other drugs in a safe, controlled setting. There is also crisis stabilization for people who gamble.

Staff at Renfrew also provide Clients with information sessions, an introduction to self-help groups, addiction treatment planning, discharge planning and referrals to other programs/services.

Their current 40 bed facility operates 24 hrs/day, 7 days a week, and offers medically supported detoxification services to people while they withdraw from the effects of alcohol and other drugs, as well as gambling stabilization. Clients usually remain at the centre for five days, but their stay can be shorter or longer depending on the severity of the withdrawal.



Renfrew Recovery Centre

24 hour detox and stabilization unit

