

On February 14, 2000, After months of brainstorming sessions, market research and board discussions, The Villa Recovery Centre for Women name was being retired and would now be known as **Aventa**. Aventa was from the French word for future (avenir) and captured the essence of the goal to help women build a new future and a new direction.

In conjunction with the upcoming expansion project, the Board and Management thought it was time to rebrand and change the organization's name to something more reflective of the mission and vision of the agency. The limitations of the Villa name had become apparent and the name was no longer distinct. It was invariably getting confused with some kind of condominium complex and tied the agency's identity to a small building. It also suggested residential based treatment only, when in fact the out patient programs were becoming a much more important part of its services to the community.

The new name was supported by a new tagline – **A Healthy Life. A New Direction** and a new logo that featured a flowing sketch of a woman striding into the future with newfound confidence.



While the name had changed, the agency's caring and professional commitment to women in recovery remained the same. The mission to assist women in building a foundation for a healthy, addiction-free lifestyle carried on, and the vision of fostering healthier women, healthier families and healthier communities was stronger than ever. It was still a place where women came to heal, recover and grow.

Dr. Monica Zilberman was a Psychiatrist Fellow at Aventa from 2001 – 2002. Dr. Zilberman graduated from the Faculty of Medicine, University of Sal Paulo and completed her post-doctoral fellowship at the Addiction Centre, University of Calgary, specializing in gender issues in addiction. She conducted the following research with an emphasis on drug addiction and mental health in women, as well as impulsiveness and emotional response.

- Personality changes in women recovering from substance-related dependence
- Relationship between craving and personality in treatment-seeking women with substance-related disorders
- The impact of gender, depression, and personality on craving
- Survey of smoking cessation services in Canadian addiction programs

Dr. Bill Campbell, a Calgary physician with a specialty in addictions, began a ten year partnership with Aventa. He provided on-site medical care to Aventa's Clients for over ten years, before retiring in 2012.

The Alberta Alcohol and Drug Abuse Commission (AADAC) celebrated its 50th year anniversary in 2001.

2001 Had been the first full year that had integrated the gambling component with other treatment groups, which proved to be successful. During this year, Aventa served over 1,900 women across all program areas, which was an increase of 34% over the previous year and Aventa was moving ahead with its expansion plans to meet the increasing demand for services.

As a result of a 2 year strategic planning process and the establishment of focus groups and committees, the organization developed a strategic plan that addressed numerous priorities, and topping the list was the need to decrease the waiting list by purchasing a larger facility. The Facility Expansion Committee engaged a local architect to produce conceptual drawings for a new centre, and meetings were held with Board and Staff to determine capital needs.

Prior to starting an ambitious capital campaign, Aventa first completed a detailed feasibility study process, and as a result, Aventa began to do more public awareness to provide the community with information and education about addictions. In addition, it was important to ensure name recognition and reintroduce the community to the gender-specific treatment program that had been serving the women in Alberta for over 30 years.

Aventa hired Kim Turgeon to be the Fund Development Director, who also managed public relations in addition to being tasked with the challenging fundraising goal of \$5 million dollars, for the purchase and renovation of a new treatment centre. Kim became Aventa's Executive Director in 2006.

In 2002, after an extensive search for a new facility over the course of two years, the decision was made to purchase the Extendicare Scottish Nursing Home located at 610 – 25 Avenue S.W. The location had an interesting history, as the original building housed a nursing home as well as a maternity centre for a brief timeframe.



The Scottish Private Hospital 1926



The Extendicare Scottish Nursing Home 1966

The original Scottish Nursing Home was built in 1915 at 613 – 24 Avenue SW, but moved to a converted mansion at 2410 – 5A Street SW and became known as the Scottish Private Hospital in 1926. During the 1940's, it served as a maternity hospital, but once again became known as the Scottish Nursing Home in the 1950's, until 1987 when Extendicare purchased the building, and the name changed to the Extendicare Scottish Nursing Home. In 1966 the mansion was demolished to make room for the new building which stands today at 610 – 25 Avenue SW.

In April 2002, Aventa hired Project Development Manager, Barb Wilkinson, to begin coordinating the details around the completion, design and renovation plans for the building. Barb served as Aventa's Board Chair from 2010 – 2012 and has been a long serving member of the Board of Directors for a total of 10 years.

This extensive project included a change of use development permit from the City of Calgary, major code upgrade and several challenges along the way that come with any renovation, especially a building that was nearly 40 years old!



Barb Wilkinson (right)

Aventa's Executive Director, Cathy Wood, met with the executive of the Cliff Bungalow Community Association, the City of Calgary Alderman and several other community leaders, who were all very supportive of the project.

Aventa's Capital Committee led the Board through a brainstorming session to identify further sources of potential funding for the capital campaign. A press conference to announce the official launch of the Capital Campaign was held on November 19, 2002 at the Sunalta facility, during Addictions Awareness Week.

The "*Gem of a Campaign*" fundraising initiative was launched using a gemstone theme for various donor categories. A donor wall theme was based upon the gemstone theme, as well as the room signage throughout the facility. The unique gemstone idea spoke to the similarities between gemstones and women; gemstones, which come in many different sizes, hues, tones and shapes, like each woman, is beautiful, unique and valuable. Both endure for generations, are born of the earth and evolve into something quite exquisite. Gemstones become extremely valuable with human intervention, and Aventa enriches the lives of women through human intervention.

Kim was able to further capitalize on this theme by creating a very successful gemstone bracelet campaign which not only raised additional money for Aventa, but helped raise the profile of the organization even further. At the peak of the campaign, there were over 100 volunteers recruited, selling bracelets in hatboxes, primarily in the corporate sector and in various communities throughout Calgary. Over three quarters of a million dollars was raised for Aventa, and the organization's profile increased significantly.



610 – 25 Avenue SW in 2002

By the end of 2002, the construction company was on board and the architects had drafted preliminary design plans for the building, furniture and equipment lists were being compiled, and Aventa's Staff and Board were working diligently to ensure every aspect of the new facility would meet both the Client's and agency's needs for many years to come.