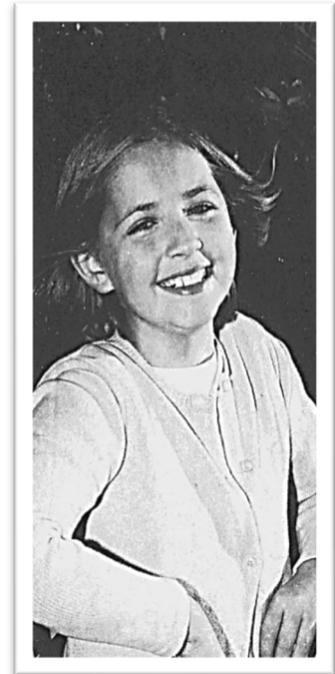
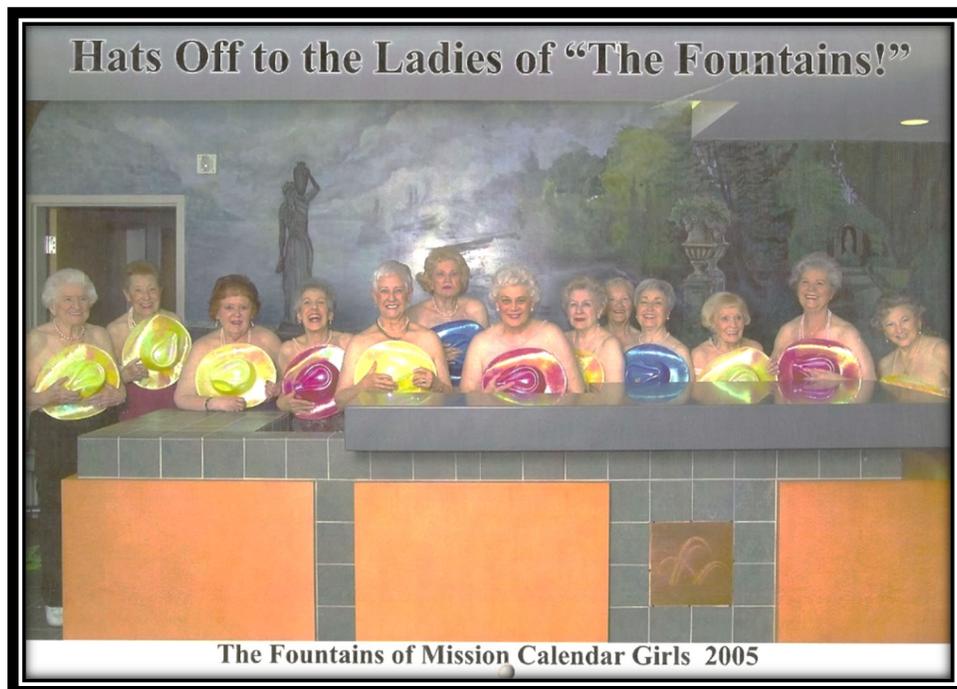


In fall of 2004, Cathy Wood's youngest daughter, Christianna Wood-Roddick, wanted to honor her mother's memory, so she spearheaded a fundraising campaign for Aventa by selling gemstone bracelets. Christianna enlisted family, friends and volunteers through her school, which raised \$40,000. She was interviewed by several local newspapers, magazines and tv programs. Christianna received the Generosity of Spirit award from the Association of Fundraising Professionals for Outstanding Youth Philanthropist. In 2005, Christianna was presented with a Great Kids Award from Premier Ralph Klein for her contribution to her community through volunteer service, and she also received an award from the Mountains of Heroes Foundation, presented by MLA Dave Rodney. With such an impressive accomplishment at a young age, it was no wonder that Christianna was chosen to present a bouquet of flowers to Queen Elizabeth II during her visit to Calgary. Aventa is forever grateful to Christianna for her generosity, community spirit and philanthropic efforts which inspired many others to get involved and volunteer for Aventa. Mature beyond her years, choosing to help others at a time of overwhelming loss is a testament to her courage and strength.



In October 2004, Eighteen women aged 69 to 94 doffed their clothes and posed for a calendar to raise funds for Aventa, based on a similar theme of the 2003 Helen Mirren film 'Calendar Girls'. The Fountains of Mission Seniors Home selected Aventa as the recipient of the funds from the sale of their calendar, which totalled over \$6,000. Aventa recognized the seniors with an appreciation tea party and tour of the facility.



In January 2005, Aventa launched a new website made possible through a grant with the Essential Talk organization. The updated website included Aventa's new logo which enhanced Aventa's brand image and represented classic elegance and femininity, which complimented the new building's look and feel. The facility's warm and welcoming atmosphere featured soft earth tones, and beautiful artwork purchased in memory of Cathy Wood.



Aventa's Sunalta facility which housed the Phase IV Program was renamed Cathy Wood House, in honor of the former Executive Director. This 10 bed Residential Addiction Support Program allowed women to remain for up to a year, which provided Clients with a combination of relapse prevention supports and long-term transitional housing. The integration of this service with the short-term treatment programs offered women a longer period of support and the option to experience recovery in a supported community-based setting.

Aventa's Board and Management Team identified the need to recruit a new Executive Director and in April 2005, Arla Liska was hired.

Women and Trauma

The overwhelming majority of women treated at Aventa have been sexually abused as a child, a victim of domestic violence, rape or trauma and are self medicating as a means by which to cope. Emerging research showed that to be successful, treatment programs needed to focus on the underlying trauma experienced by women with addictions, rather than just substance abuse. A trauma-informed curriculum was implemented throughout Aventa's programming which gave Clients an opportunity to learn about the development and affects of addiction, engage in the treatment process and access a range of resources to address the underlying issues associated with their trauma and addiction.

In addition, more than 75% of women accessing Aventa's services identified having a mental health issue. In response, Aventa began utilizing expert mental health consultation from the community, which helped to increase internal expertise at assessing and addressing the concurrent mental health issues of women seeking addiction treatment.

When Women are Healthy, Families and Communities are Healthy

Aventa continued to focus on the prevention of Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) by providing immediate access to addiction treatment services for pregnant women. Early intervention can decrease the risks associated with FASD. Many women who come to Aventa have not had any prenatal care, and Aventa ensures that they receive this care through its collaboration with community agencies. At this time, over 70% of Aventa's Clients were pregnant or parenting while trying to cope with their addiction, and it was estimated that 50% of the 6,600 children in Alberta Government care had FASD. Aventa connects women to needed support systems to help keep children out of the foster care system and working towards a healthy mother and child relationship.





Pregnant and parenting women need additional support through the recovery process, such as regular health and medical care, psycho-educational groups, and regular counselling sessions in a safe, supportive and non-judgmental environment. Women whose parents were abusive or struggled with substance abuse did not grow up with positive role models and need help to develop their own healthy parenting skills. Aventa's Parenting Program helps women explore and understand their role as mothers within the

context of recovery with topics including: Myths and Realities about parenting, Needs and Stage, Parenting Styles, Communication, Feelings, Self-Esteem/Self-Image, Bullying/Violence, Engaging your Child's Cooperation without Nagging, Sibling without Rivalry, Punishment vs Discipline, Logical vs Natural Consequences, Teens, and the First Five Crucial Years.

In September 2005, gambling addiction continued to be a hot topic, and the Calgary Herald published an in-depth two-part feature, focusing on a Calgary nurse's story of addiction and her journey to recovery. With help from Aventa and Gambler's Anonymous, she was able to work through her guilt and shame, repair broken relationships, overcome her addiction and resume her nursing career.

It was reported that half of all problem gamblers in Alberta were women, and one in 5 women who are problem gamblers seriously consider suicide. The guilt associated with gambling is far worse than other addictions which often leads to grave outcomes. Each year in Canada it was believed that 200 compulsive gamblers took their own lives, although no one knows exactly how many lives are lost to gambling.

Aventa's Clinical Supervisor Gaylene Heidt who was interviewed for the article, said that *"women gamble to be alone and to get away from stress"*. Men often start gambling young, betting with friends, whereas problem female gamblers tend to be older and tend to do it as an escape. Gambling can make depressed gamblers feel more alive and their motivation is often *"the thrill of winning"*. For many women who have been sexually abused and have a history of trauma, as was the case of the woman featured in the article, try to *"escape their body"* by gambling, which numbs them to reality.

A study by Calgary's Foothills Hospital found that gamblers crave their drug of choice more than alcoholics crave a drink. On a craving-rating scale of zero to 90, gamblers scored 49, exceeding alcoholics who rated 35. These findings were important since cravings are directly associated with relapse rates. The study also found gamblers are more spontaneous and impulsive than those with alcohol or drug addiction.

At this time, Aventa remained the only agency providing residential and day treatment problem gambling services in Western Canada exclusively for women.