

Portraits of Ricochet

October 31, 2025



At 59, Éric is learning to turn pain into wisdom. Behind his steady gaze and calm voice is a man shaped by hardship, yet filled with kindness and quiet strength.

ÉRIC LANGE – 59 years old

A Fighter With a Musical Soul

A Marked Childhood

Born in Montreal, Éric grew up in the West Island in a middle-class family. His childhood was shadowed by constant conflict between his parents and his father's violence.

"One Christmas, when I was four years old, my sister hid me in the bathroom to protect me when things had gotten out of control and violence broke out in the house."

No one intervened. The neighbors saw and heard, but turned away. Those early years left a lasting imprint of fear and injustice.

As a teenager, Éric still carried that emotional weight. With little family support, he found refuge in music. At 13, he discovered the drums — rhythm became his way to express what words could not. "Music saved me."

Between Music and Construction

As an adult, Éric balanced two worlds: the stage and the construction site. A professional drummer and construction worker, he blended creativity with hard work. In 2000, at age 40, he took a vacation to the Caribbean — a trip that would change his life

Drawn by the warmth of the people and the simplicity of island life, he accepted a job there and stayed for more than ten years. He discovered a slower, more peaceful rhythm rooted in community and nature. "I was myself, at last." He even considered applying for citizenship, but his mother's illness brought him back to Canada.



An Abrupt Return

Back in Montreal, Éric returned to a strained family situation: a mother burdened with debt, a father still legally married to her after decades spent elsewhere and years of resentment between them.

He moved in to help his mother, but life together became increasingly difficult. Stress, anger and loneliness took hold, and alcohol became a way to cope.

Then his mother passed away — a devastating blow. The loss sent him into a deep depression. Hospitalized at Douglas, Éric was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).

Loss and Drift

After his recovery, Éric tried to rebuild his life with a partner. An unexpected breakup left him without resources and without a place to live. Almost overnight, he lost his home and nearly all his belongings.

An Unexpected Refuge

During a difficult moment, a police officer told him about Ricochet. Éric arrived with his two loyal dogs, Willie and Maya, and finally found a place where he felt accepted. “I’m not here because of alcohol or mental illness — I’m here because life shook me hard. I just need a place to rest, to breathe.”

He still remembers his first impression upon arriving at the Ricochet Center: “It’s phenomenal. I used to fish here when I was young. I never imagined that one day, I’d find refuge here.”

Before that, Éric had built a strong foundation for himself. He graduated from Collège Beaubois in Pierrefonds-Roxboro, a place he still remembers fondly.

Giving Back

Sober for several months, Éric is slowly regaining confidence. He often talks about the younger residents he meets at the Ricochet Center — young people he observes with empathy and respect.



“Young people need to be spoken to like human beings. We have to deal with trauma, not blame.”

His reflections reach far beyond his own story. Éric dreams of a society that is more humane and compassionate — one where everyone has access to housing, understanding, and dignity.

He admires Nordic models, like those in Finland and Sweden, where social support is built on trust rather than judgment.

Éric has thoughtful ideas, dreams and aspirations that invite us to dream — and reflect — alongside him.

Toward a New Balance

Today, Éric focuses on his healing, his dogs and the few friends who have stayed close. He also enjoys speaking with residents and various community stakeholders, finding small ways to stay involved and support Ricochet.

His past left scars, but he maintains a clear and generous outlook on life. “I don’t want to run away anymore. I just want to do my part — to help when I can.”

When asked what homelessness means to him, he answers with one word: “Terror.”

Then he adds softly, “But sometimes, in the midst of terror, you also find solidarity.”

