



January 12, 2022

ShelterCare Program at 190 Weber Street North, Waterloo

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

### **Who is House of Friendship?**

Sheltering was the first service House of Friendship provided to this community when it was founded in 1939 by a group of women who took it upon themselves to care for men experiencing homelessness during the Great Depression. From those humble roots over 80 years ago, today we walk with those in need throughout Waterloo Region in four key service areas – Housing, Food, Addiction Treatment, and vital Neighbourhood supports for families living on low income Region-wide. Learn more at [www.houseoffriendship.org](http://www.houseoffriendship.org).

### **What services will be provided at this location?**

The ShelterCare program ([www.sheltercare.ca](http://www.sheltercare.ca)) will provide temporary housing and wrap-around housing and healthcare supports for 100 men. These onsite wrap-around services include primary health care, housing resources, addiction and mental health counselling, and in-house programming like art and music therapy. While there, participants are connected with a support worker who will help them on their journey to become housing ready, and then to find permanent housing.

### **What other locations were considered before the decision was made to purchase this hotel?**

In partnership with our municipal and regional leadership, we have conducted an exhaustive, lengthy and comprehensive search for a suitable location to resume our ShelterCare program and provide some stability for the foreseeable future. This location was the best place for our program among properties that were available to purchase.

### **When will this change take place?**

The purchase of the building has just been finalized, and renovation plans need to be completed. It is anticipated to be several months before we are ready to begin offering services at this location.

### **What happens to the men in your shelter program in the meantime? Is there anywhere for them to go?**

With support from the Region of Waterloo, alternate accommodations were found in the interim for the men displaced from our Shelter program that was operating in Guelph and temporarily closed on Nov. 30, 2021 when the lease expired and we no longer had a location to run ShelterCare. One of the interim locations includes 26 men staying at House of Friendship's former shelter building on Charles Street in Kitchener where we are operating a transitional housing program.

### **How long do you plan to provide support to men who are homeless from this location?**

With funding support from the Province of Ontario, we have purchased 190 Weber Street North, Waterloo to operate ShelterCare and provide some stability for the foreseeable future, a much-needed change for staff and participants who have endured the trauma of this program being dislocated four times since the pandemic began.

### **I'm concerned that these men will cause problems in our neighbourhood. What can you say to reassure me?**

The individuals who come to our ShelterCare program have faced significant challenges in their lives - life has been incredibly difficult for them. Many of them have experienced trauma as children, have acquired brain injuries, and struggle with mental health and addiction. Our support is needed more than ever for these vulnerable community members. While we'd love to say that this work is neat and tidy and it always runs smoothly and without any problems, that is not realistic. However, our commitment to you is to be good neighbours and manage challenges as they arise. Together with our community, we will listen to the needs and voices of our neighbours, balanced with the complex needs of those experiencing homelessness in Waterloo Region.

### **Will drugs and alcohol be used on site?**

Addiction is a common health issue for those who are homeless. Our team will be on-site 24/7 to support participants with issues that arise, and will provide health-care supports for those wishing to address their drug and alcohol use, including counselling and withdrawal management.

### **What measures will be taken to ensure that those staying in your program will follow all rules and guidelines set out by the House of Friendship?**

Our program is staffed 24/7 by trained team members who work closely with the individuals in our shelter to maintain a safe and inclusive shared space.

### **Do you keep a list of the individuals who will be in the shelter?**

Region-wide, shelter program participants are registered in a database system that is used nationally for those experiencing homelessness. Our program is staffed 24/7 with team members who know our program participants and their stories, and are equipped to support them.

### **What should I do if I see behaviour that concerns me? How do I report it?**

- Criminal Behaviour and Emergencies - If you see any behaviour on site or near our shelter program that involves active criminal behaviour (e.g. violence, fire, theft, weapon present, indecency, property damage, etc.) or constitutes a medical emergency (such as a suspected overdose), please call 9-1-1 and ask for immediate assistance.
- Wellbeing or Non-Criminal Behaviour - If you are concerned about someone's wellbeing or behaviour, but do **not** think it's an active emergency, you may call Waterloo Regional Police at their non-emergency number to request support: 519-570-9777.

- Debris and Garbage – If the debris/garbage is found on city-owned property, please call Waterloo Municipal Enforcement Services at 519-747-8785.
- Needles – If needles are found on city-owned property please call:
  - Monday-Friday (7AM-4PM and excluding Statutory Holidays) – 519-886-2310
  - Monday-Friday (4PM-7AM), Weekends and Statutory Holidays – 519-579-9557
  - Email 24/7: sharpscleanup@waterloo.ca
- Noise – Please call Waterloo Regional Police at their non-emergency number to request By-law Enforcement at 519-570-9777.
- Once the program is operational, we will provide on-site contacts numbers for any concerns related to the program itself.

### **What COVID protocols will be in place on site?**

We follow Region of Waterloo Public Health protocols in our ShelterCare program and we reinforce these safety protocols daily and continually educate those in the program. We do our best to ensure that these guidelines are adhered to, in an effort to keep our participants, our staff, and our community safe.

### **I would like to support these men in some way. What can I do to help?**

Those we serve in our ShelterCare program have been told they are unwanted, not worth much and don't have much value all their lives. You can change that. When they enter our program, your care and support will help them address the weighty challenges they face, to become healthier and transition to independent housing – and a new future. You can support by smiling and saying hello as you see these community members, or by providing a financial donation at [www.houseoffriendship.org](http://www.houseoffriendship.org), or by advocating with your neighbours that these lives matter too and everyone should have the opportunity to belong and thrive.

### **I would like to know more about House of Friendship and your range of programs. Where can I get information?**

You can visit [www.houseoffriendship.org](http://www.houseoffriendship.org) to learn about the ways that House of Friendship supports men, women and children throughout Waterloo Region, walking with those who need food, housing, addiction treatment and vital supports in low income neighbourhoods Region-wide. To learn more specifically about the ShelterCare model, visit [www.sheltercare.ca](http://www.sheltercare.ca)

### **Where can I find updates on your ShelterCare program at this location?**

As we prepare the building and property to begin providing services, we will provide updates as available at [www.houseoffriendship.org/shelterupdates](http://www.houseoffriendship.org/shelterupdates).

### **I would like to talk to someone about my concerns. Who should I contact?**

Gail Martin, Marketing and Communications Specialist, is available at 519-742-8327 x 132 or [GailM@houseoffriendship.org](mailto:GailM@houseoffriendship.org). She will direct your comment or question to the appropriate person for a quick response.