



Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board

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MEDIA RELEASE

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Pop-Up Homeless Shelter Opening Its Doors

Fort Frances, Ontario – 2017/12/14 – IMMEDIATE RELEASE

As part of a short-term solution to ongoing long-range planning of homelessness services in the Rainy River District, a “pop-up” temporary out-of-the-cold shelter will be opened at Apostolic Way Church on the corner of Church Street and Victoria Avenue. Beginning early in 2018, the church will open its basement to individuals 16 and over, who require a warm bed on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday nights. This is the result of several months of community partnership meetings between Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board (RRDSSAB), Rainy River District Victim Services Program, Northern Community Development Services, the United Native Friendship Centre and other organizations around the community.

Volunteers from various church groups around Fort Frances will be there to serve a meal and set up beds at the beginning of the evening, so individuals using the shelter will be able to escape the cold Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of each week until April, when the weather is less dangerous. The program will only be open through the night and those accessing the shelter will be asked to leave in the morning. The Out-of-the-Cold program will be operated mainly by volunteers. In the near future, the agencies involved in this initiative will be seeking volunteers to help out during the overnight hours at the church.

“Safety precautions will be put in place. The OPP, Treaty 3 Police Services and the Bear Clan Patrol who are also aware of this initiative will be checking in throughout the night,” said Peggy Loyie, Program Manager with the Rainy River District Victim Services Program. “We will be looking for volunteers who will need to have sound judgement, and compassion, will need to pass a Vulnerable Sector Check with the OPP, and be willing to take the required training”, adds Loyie. The organizing agencies are finalizing details including security, training, and logistics such as clean-up, before recruiting.

Though the “pop-up” shelter is new to Fort Frances, homelessness is not. Jamie Petrin, Community Homeless Liaison for the RRDSSAB notes, “Those of us working in

social services hear regularly how surprising it is to learn that there are homeless people living in Fort Frances. It's unfortunate but a real fact. With no form of emergency homeless shelter in Fort Frances especially, we approached the churches for assistance." After a number of discussions related to logistical matters and safety were discussed, Apostolic Way stepped forward to provide space in their basement. The group continues to search for available spaces suitable for "pop-up" shelters to be able to provide seven nights per week out of the cold.

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We are glad to provide you with information on newsworthy events. Please assist us in our continuing efforts to meet the needs of the citizens in our district.

For more information, please contact Sandra Weir, Integrated Services Manager, RRDSSAB at sandraw@rrdssab.on.ca or 807-274-5349 ext 230

Or

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