

DEC. 17, 2021: NEW TRANSITION HOUSE TO OPEN

Dec. 17, 2021, Kingston, ON – There will soon be another home in Kingston for homeless individuals moving towards independence.

The Board of Directors of Ryandale Transitional Housing is pleased to announce that Ryandale will be expanding its operations by opening a second Transition House in the historic limestone manse of St. Andrew's Church, Kingston, built in 1841, at the corner of Queen St. and Clergy St. E.

"This is a very exciting time for us," Bob Crawford, Chair of Ryandale's board, stated. "We will offer seven additional transitional housing beds through a leasing agreement with St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church."

The transition house will be home to seven men who are "graduates" of Ryandale's step one transition house. These men will gain additional social and personal management skills as they progress toward independent living in their own homes. The house will provide safe and affordable accommodation and access to the essential community support services that help residents succeed on their own.

"Our next step will be to hire a new House Administrator to oversee day-to-day house operations," Crawford added. This position is being funded by a generous donation from the United Way of KFL&A, of which Ryandale is a partner agency.

For over a year, the congregation of St. Andrew's Church has been exploring how it might repurpose the church manse to contribute safe and affordable accommodation in the midst of Kingston's current housing crisis.

"Over the past year, we have worked with Ryandale and the City of Kingston to come up with a workable solution," said the Rev. Andrew Johnston of St. Andrew's Church. "The result is an initiative that allows the members of St. Andrew's to use this historic asset – the manse – to achieve a practical response to the housing and homelessness emergency faced by many in our city."

St. Andrew's as landlord will receive the portion of residents' housing allowance provided by government social assistance. "We acknowledge that current government supports are inadequate for life in our city. This initiative involves a significant financial commitment by the congregation, but is also a significant act of solidarity and advocacy," Rev. Johnston noted.

The City of Kingston has been instrumental in bringing the project to fruition, helping both organizations to navigate planning, zoning and fire codes. The City of Kingston is also providing rent supplements for each room to make the project financially feasible, as well as some start-up funding to assist with minor building renovations. In the first several months of operations, the manse will be used as part of the City's COVID-19 emergency housing response.

Ryandale has been able to continue its work and open this new facility through very generous donations from local businesses, such as Sleep Country Canada, as well as many private donors, but more funds are still needed.

"Even with St. Andrew's receiving the housing allowance provided by social assistance, and funding from the United Way for staffing, there are some start-up and ongoing expenses." Crawford indicated that Ryandale will need to replace the manse's aging carpet with laminate flooring, which would cost about \$10,000, as well as to purchase some appliances and furniture, at about \$2,000 per bedroom, and fire safety equipment that will cost about \$1,000 total. "We will also need funds for shared consumables to operate day to day."

Donors are welcome to make contributions online at:

The need for additional transitional housing became more obvious when the City undertook an evaluation of its 10-year homelessness plan about a year ago. Based on that assessment, the City of Kingston recognized the need for additional Transitional Housing programming in the area. The multi-level government funding that has been made available to municipalities over the past year has facilitated this expansion, and this new initiative is part of the City's ongoing commitment to reduce homelessness in the City of Kingston.

END

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Background: Ryandale Shelter

Ryandale Shelter began its operation in 1985 by a coalition of 7 local churches who recognized a local need to provide shelter services to the increasing unhoused population in Kingston. Initially funded through local and congregational contributions and managed by volunteers, it operated from its Elm Street location until its closure in the spring of 2017. At the time of its closure, it provided overnight accommodation for up to 15 unhoused people daily, had 7 paid staff, an Executive Director and a Board of eight representing a cross section of the Kingston community.

Recognizing the need for additional services for the homeless population, Ryandale opened the Transition House in 2010. The concept of Transitional Housing is broadly seen as an intermediate step between chronic homelessness and full stable residency. It is an opportunity for selected individuals to address the issues that have given rise to their homelessness in a supportive, individualized program focused, residential setting for up to one year.

Initially, the Transition House received the majority of its residents from the former Shelter operation, however since its closure Ryandale accepts referrals from many local agencies including Salvation Army Harbour Lights, Correctional Services Canada, Home Based Housing, local mental health services and local addictions services.

During its 17 years in operation, The Transitional Housing program boasts an 85% success rate.

For further information, please visit our website at ryandale.ca or contact us by email at ryandaleshelter@cogeco.net

Background: St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

St. Andrew's is a community of Christians that have had a church home on the corner of Princess and Clergy for 200 years, and have a long history of social initiatives, including the founding of Queen's University, and currently provides a home for The Mess Open Arts Studio.

The superbly crafted Regency style limestone manse was constructed in 1841 to house the congregation's second minister and his family. The renowned architect, George Brown, also designed St George's Cathedral in Kingston. Heritage Canada describes this house as "unaltered and in excellent condition" and "among the finest houses in Kingston."

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The large rooms with bright heritage windows and high ceilings will provide seven bedrooms as well as an office/common room and spacious kitchen/dining room for Ryandale residents, in an ideal downtown location close to many community resources.

For further information, please visit the St. Andrew's website at www.standrewskingston.org or contact us by email at info@standrewskingston.org