

# BREAKING NEWS

Supportive Housing of Waterloo becomes the Region's first organization to dedicate housing to older adults experiencing homelessness

## Building Designated as Supportive Housing for Older Adults

*New supportive housing building for older adults (60+) planned*

Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW) has announced that its affordable housing building at 144 Erb Street East is now focused on housing older adults 60+ who are experiencing chronic homelessness. SHOW is the first organization in Waterloo Region to designate a building solely to housing older adults 60+ from the Region's waitlist for those experiencing chronic homelessness, called PATHS (Prioritized Access to Housing Supports).



## Lack of Dedicated Supportive Housing Prompts Decision

*Rising numbers of older adults experiencing homelessness led SHOW to designate 144 Erb as seniors supportive housing*

“The number of older adults entering homelessness has essentially doubled in the past year,” says Brian Paul, SHOW’s Executive Director. “Because of this, SHOW is providing affordable housing and onsite supports to older adults who are on the streets, in the shelter system, or in one of the encampments throughout the Region.” SHOW has found that while the number of older adults experiencing homelessness has increased, there is also a lack of dedicated supportive housing for

this demographic.

“There are many excellent organizations doing great work in providing affordable and supportive housing in the Waterloo Region,” says Paul. “But older adults remain an extremely vulnerable and underserved group. Leveraging our experience with supportive housing and expanding our focus to include this demographic fills a critical gap in the housing continuum here in Waterloo Region.”

**“Vulnerable older adults (60+) deserve dignity and a sense of belonging, inclusion, community, and family”**

*- Brian Paul Executive Director*

### History of 144 Erb

SHOW took over the Civitan building in 2020 promising to keep all residents housed

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### Support is Essential

Breaking the cycle of homelessness is not just about providing housing.

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### Your Help is Needed

There is a way that you can help older adults experiencing homelessness

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## SHOW Purchased Building in 2020

Many upgrades and additions have been completed to support residents.

In 2020, SHOW purchased the 24-unit building from the Civitan Organization, with an understanding that the resident population would not be displaced, which SHOW has honored.

Many of the residents at Civitan had lived in their homes for several years, and due to their fixed incomes, had concerns about being displaced or having their rents raised.

Since purchasing the building, SHOW has made significant upgrades, including:

- Safety & maintenance upgrades
- Cosmetic updates to multiple units
- Transforming an unused boardroom into a new unit
- Enhancing outdoor space with a new gazebo
- Renovating an unused space into a warm & welcoming community room for residents
- Creating a new office area for staff, including a newly hired case manager to support residents



Chocolate Time Donors and SHOW staff gathered to celebrate the opening of the new community space

## Chocolate Time Community Room Opens

A generous donation allowed for the renovation of several community spaces.

Dave Kroetsch, Steffen Lindner, and Mike Peasgood have worked together for many years. They share a vision for their community that includes inclusiveness, respect, tolerance, and unity. They strive for their workplaces to share these values. They created community spaces within their workplaces that allowed them and their co-workers to connect daily, often

over coffee and chocolate. When Dave, Steffen, and Mike heard about the residents at 144 Erb wanting a community space of their own they were compelled to act. Through a very generous donation they allowed for the renovation of an outdoor space as well as creating a new community room for residents and an office space for staff.

## Boardroom to Bedroom



An unused boardroom (Above) was converted into a brand-new unit (Below), making the building a total of 25 units



## On-Site Supports Critical for Residents

Ensuring residents REMAIN housed is essential.

The Canadian Observatory on Homelessness defines supportive housing as: "Housing which combines rental or housing assistance with individualized, flexible and voluntary support services for people with high needs related to physical or mental health, developmental disabilities or substance use."

Research shows that a stable, supported housing environment is essential to maintaining optimum health, both physically and mentally.

The Canadian Mental Health Association states that Housing with Supports contributes to better physical and mental health and leads to positive outcomes, including:



- Increased personal safety
- Decreased stress
- Improved sleep
- Better diet
- Increased sense of empowerment
- Enhanced life skills
- More involvement in the community
- Reduction in psychiatric symptoms
- Decrease in the need for emergency and treatment services.

## What Does Support Look Like at SHOW?

These are the types of onsite services and programs we have available to residents:

- Food security programs
- Counselling
- Healthcare (nurse and doctor)
- Case management
- Life skills supports
- Social & recreational activities

## The Cost of Supportive Housing

Supportive housing is a better option for individuals and their pocketbooks.

Research shows that supportive housing keeps individuals housed and has significant savings for the community.

- Every \$10 invested in supportive housing results in an average savings of \$21.72 across the health care, social services, and justice systems.
- Providing a shelter bed is \$2,100 per month or three times more expensive than supportive housing, which costs \$613 per-month.
- Providing a hospital bed is \$13,500 per month, 22 times more expensive.

SHOW looks forward to continuing to be a leader in supportive housing. We house the hardest to house and had zero residents return to homelessness in 2022.



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## Maintaining This Level of Support Cannot be Achieved Without Community Support



Vulnerable older adults 60+ will now be able to age in a place they call home, with affordable housing and onsite support, including food security programs, healthcare, counselling, social and recreational activities, and life skills support.

The purchase of the building, numerous upgrades, and the insistence in keeping this type of housing affordable and supportive comes at a price. With increasing expenses, rising interest rates, and the higher cost to run programs, there is even more pressure on staff. SHOW, now more than ever, is dependent on gifts from community members like you to maintain the level of support that our older adults deserve.

Please consider providing a gift to SHOW to ensure that old adults in your community are provided with the affordable housing and support needed to end the cycle of homelessness.

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**“Supportive Housing is now considered best practice for breaking the cycle of homelessness. Everyone deserves safe and affordable housing.”**

*-Brian Paul Executive Director*

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**YES! I would love to provide a gift that will help provide on-site support to seniors in my community.**

<<NAME1>>

<<ADD>>

<<ADD2>>

<<CITY>> <<PROV>> <<PC>>

**Today, I would love to commit to a gift of:**

\$25.00

I have enclosed a cheque

\$75.00

I would like to pay by credit card

100.00

I would like to make a gift of \_\_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiry: \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

Card Holder Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_