

Media Release – The Lodge on Dawson – Partnership For Transitional Housing

July 26, 2019, Thunder Bay – Plans to build 30 new transitional housing beds in Thunder Bay are closer to becoming a reality through The Lodge on Dawson.

A joint partnership between The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, St. Joseph's Foundation of Thunder Bay, St. Joseph's Care Group, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and Alpha Court, The Lodge on Dawson transitional housing will provide services to people living with addictions and mental health challenges and struggling with chronic homelessness to make positive change in a supported environment.

For people living with mental illness and addiction, finding and sustaining housing without supports is incredibly challenging. Often, individuals will cycle through the emergency department, withdrawal management, shelters, and/or even in jail. Transitional housing provides a safe place to live, healthy foods, and professional supports where people are able to stabilize and then move forward in setting long-term goals while addressing mental health and/or addiction issues. Providing this level of supportive transitional housing means individuals will get the care they need and will reduce demands on an already-strained health care system.

Next steps will include renovating the site, which operated as a hotel, to meet the needs of clients and support staff. If all goes according to plan, The Lodge on Dawson will begin accepting clients in early fall of this year.

Quick Facts

- The Lodge on Dawson has been made possible, in part, through Home for Good one-time funding from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board.
- Right now, there are over 1,000 persons currently on the waitlist for housing, and Thunder Bay's shelters are averaging 137% capacity.
- The April 2018 District of Thunder Bay Point-in-Time Count of People Experiencing Homelessness found that 59% of those polled had been homeless for 6 months or more in the past year

QUOTES

“St. Joseph’s Foundation of Thunder Bay is thrilled to provide financial support for the purchase and renovations to The Lodge on Dawson transitional program. On behalf of the St. Joseph’s Foundation of Thunder Bay, we are excited to be in joint partnership with The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, St. Joseph’s Care Group, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and Alpha Court to support people who want to make a positive life change.” Sandra Sutherland-Byers, Chair St. Joseph’s Foundation of Thunder Bay

“Thunder Bay has immediate and urgent need for transitional housing for people struggling with chronic homelessness as well as addiction and mental illness. Through partnership with St. Joseph’s Foundation of Thunder Bay, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care, and Alpha Court, The Lodge on Dawson will help to meet that need. It will provide a safe, healthy and supported transitional environment to help people move towards securing a stable home while developing life skills and meeting their health goals.” Tracy Buckler, President & CEO, St. Joseph’s Care Group

“TBDSSAB is excited to work with its community partners to identify individuals who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, determine their individual needs for housing and supports, and attentively address the unique needs of this population. The Lodge on Dawson offers the opportunity through partnership to close the significant gap for people struggling with chronic homelessness, as well as mental health and substance use challenges, to find a safe and supported environment.” Lucy Kloosterhuis, Board Chair, The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board

“Dilico Anishinabek Family Care is pleased to work with our community partners to find viable solutions for people in our community who experience chronic homelessness. The Lodge on Dawson will provide individuals who may otherwise cycle in out of withdraw management services, the emergency department, and/or shelters with a transitional housing service that meets their mental health and addiction needs. Furthermore, through this partnership, The Lodge on Dawson will provide Indigenous individuals with onsite culture-based services.” Tina Bobinski, Assistant Director of Mental Health and Addictions, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care

“Alpha Court is excited to be a part of The Lodge on Dawson transitional program. As housing providers, we see firsthand how people without appropriate support can end up in a cycle of homelessness. The Lodge on Dawson is filling a significant gap within the continuum of housing in the community. It will provide a safe and supported environment for people who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless to stabilize and prepare to transition to permanent housing.” Nicole Latour, Executive Director of Alpha Court

Please direct any inquiries to:

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Questions & Answers

The Lodge on Dawson Transitional Housing

WHAT IS TRANSITIONAL HOUSING?

The Lodge on Dawson is a program that will be provided by St. Joseph's Care Group in partnership with Alpha Court, Dilico Anishinabek Family Care and The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB).

This program will fulfill an unmet need in our community for people who want to make a positive change in their lives, but first need to get their feet underneath them by having their basic needs met, e.g. a safe place to live, healthy food and professional supports. With a stable environment provided, clients can begin to move forward in setting long-term goals and address mental health and/or addiction issues.

WHO WILL BE LIVING THERE?

This is a voluntary program that will serve male and female adults who are continuing treatment and rehabilitation for mental health and substance use issues - these individuals could be your family, friends or neighbours. Residents must be medically stable and meet the criteria for high support housing needs.

HOW IS THIS PROGRAM DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS ALREADY PROVIDED?

It stops the cycle for people who are caught in the revolving door of time-limited services provided by the Emergency Department, Shelter House and Balmoral Centre. This new program fulfills a need by providing an extended (longer) stay in a stable environment so they can make a positive change in their lives, and make long-term plans with the proper supports in place.

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT IS PROVIDED?

Staff will be on-site 24-hours, 7 days per week providing services and supports. The clinical team includes a variety of professions, including nursing, psychotherapists, counselors and physicians. In addition, staff will accompany residents during any activities and outings.

HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL BE LIVING THERE?

The Lodge on Dawson can provide accommodations for up to 30 individuals.

HOW LONG WILL THEY BE LIVING THERE?

The lengths of stay will vary from several weeks to several months depending upon individual needs.

HOW IS THIS PROGRAM FUNDED?

All support services are funded by the Ontario Government. Similar to affordable housing requirements, residents are required to pay rent that is geared to income.

WHAT IF I HAVE A CONCERN OR QUESTION IN THE FUTURE?

Any concerns or questions can be brought to the attention of on-site staff 24-hours a day.