



Mission Possible Newsletter



Christmas Edition

The Downtown Mission

2021

Increasing Homeless Population Pushing Demand for Downtown Mission Services



Don't take our word for it, the City of Windsor's Point in Time Report on homelessness confirms it! The number of people who are chronically homeless has increased! In addition, food banks across the Province are reporting increased use by individuals and families who do not have access to a secure food source.

The Downtown Mission is the community's largest shelter and its only low-barrier one, providing 80 beds for hurting men, women and youth who have no safe place to sleep at night. This is a reduction in the Mission's capacity from 103 beds due to COVID safety requirements. It's a vital component of the city's shelter system.

The Downtown Mission's Shelter has been at capacity every night over the past few weeks. Individuals seeking a bed for the night begin lining up at 5:00 PM, even though intake begins at 8:00 PM. This year alone, our Service Support team members have responded to 115 drug overdose emergencies and have not

lost a single soul because of their training and skills. The Housing First Program has helped 83 people find a new place to live. The Food Bank has helped feed 13,484 individuals and 6,831 households. The Mission also delivers a substance recovery program for men, women, and youth in addition to health care navigation and spiritual counselling.

"We are seeing more people needing food, clothing and shelter. For every meal, we have a lineup that can reach 25 to 30 people, all waiting outside in the elements for something to eat. Sanctuary, our overnight shelter, is full each night by 9:30 or 10. Who knows how many people could be sleeping outside in the cold? Our staff do our best to provide these emergency services, to think we could do more if we had the resources is heartbreaking," said Matt Johnson, Director of Programs and Services.

The Mission relies on donations from individuals, corporations, trade unions, faith communities, foundations, and civic organizations to fund its programs and services. A small percentage of its operating funds come from a handful of funders which ensures the continuation of specific programs like the Mission's Enterprise Program (City of Windsor) and the Phoenix Recovery Program (Erie St. Clair LHIN).

Federal COVID-Relief Shelter funding has helped provide additional staffing and space on the Mission's second floor. This funding expires March 31st, 2022, causing a gap in service that could leave 40 individuals without a safe shelter.

"We are very concerned with these alarming trends," explained the Mission's Board Chair Michele MacGregor. "The need and demand for our services is at an all-time high, but unfortunately our community donations are not keeping pace with the increased needs that the Mission has been facing this year. For the past 10 years, we have been the proverbial canary in the coal mine, going forward and responding to the needs of hurting people

without reservation. Despite our current financial situation, and if not for the trust of our generous Donors over the years, our community's homeless situation would be disastrous."

Please support the Mission and consider making a generous monetary donation to ensure all our vital programs and services continue to be available to hurting people in our community. Donations can be made online through the Downtown Mission's website at www.downtownmission.com, click on the Donate Today icon, by mail or in person at their 664 Victoria Avenue location.

"The Christmas Season is traditionally a time when many in our community make a charitable contribution to a cause that touches them, and they believe in. The Downtown Mission is helping hurting people who have no other means of support. A gift to the Mission can literally save a life," said Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin, Interim Executive Director.



Thank you to our Board of Directors

Michele McGregor, Chair; Sandor Kapasi, Vice Chair; Dolph Barsanti, Treasurer; Rev. Dr. Catherine Collins-Barker, Secretary; Directors - Abram Banman, Amy Visser, Anna St. Antoine, David Tell, Keith Rivard, Kenneth Gray Jr., Kris McInnis.

We Need Your Help

Items needed urgently to help those who are hungry, homeless!

- \$5 or \$10 Tim Horton's/McDonald's Gift Cards
- \$25 Food Basics, PC and Walmart Gift Cards
- Winter Socks/Toques/Gloves (with fingers)
 - Men's and Women's Underwear
 - Toothbrushes/Toothpaste (travel-size)
- Individual Kleenex packages, Chapstick, Hand Lotion (travel-size)

Items can be dropped off to 664 Victoria Ave (9 am - 8 pm)

Message from Interim Executive Director



Dear Mission Family,

Christmas and Holiday Greetings. I am honoured to be serving you, our Mission family, as the Downtown Mission's Interim Executive Director.

It's been a time of changes and challenges here at The Downtown Mission! We are so very grateful to every one of you for your support, kindness and prayers!!! We wouldn't be able to do the work we do, providing food, shelter and hope to the hurting alone. Every

day we feel blessed and thank God for your trust.

I am truly honoured to work with The Mission's dedicated Staff who work tirelessly each day and night to meet the challenging and complex needs of those who seek our comfort and help. I also feel tremendously blessed to have had the opportunity to meet even more of our incredible Volunteers. Your passion and compassion in sharing your talents with us and the people you help is truly inspiring. Let me also express deep gratitude to our Donors. YOU have been lifesavers in a time of spiraling costs and pressure to offer higher volumes of services. You have helped us keep our doors open to help the most vulnerable in our community. Together, we make a difference and reveal God's love and mercy at every opportunity to the men, women, youth and families who come to us.

During this religious season, we ask that you please keep The Downtown Mission and those who come here in your prayers. We need your faith and well wishes, as much as ever. If you have not done so, please consider

making a financial gift to help us through the end of a very difficult year and help us plan our programs and services into the new year. Your time and talents are also in great demand! Volunteering is a wonderful gift to others, please think about helping the Mission serve those who need it most in 2022.

Thank you again for your faithful support! Thank YOU to all of you, for continuing to allow the Downtown Mission to be a guiding light to our hurting, wary, and lost neighbours. Thank you for being beacon that shines in the darkness for so many! We are sharply focused on doing the Lord's work here in Windsor-Essex, on your behalf.

From all of us at The Downtown Mission, our Staff, Volunteers and our Guests, we wish YOU a truly blessed Christmas Season. Stay safe, strong, and hopeful and we pray we see YOU soon!

Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin
Interim Executive Director

Save the Date

Our CNOY fundraising event is scheduled for Saturday, February 26, 2022. The Coldest Night of the Year is our biggest annual fundraising event. It's a family friendly walk to raise money for the Mission's programs that serve the hurting, hungry and homeless in our community and people can sign up to join us in their own neighbourhoods through

- www.cnoy.org/windsor.

Team up, walk, have fun, and help the Downtown Mission. It's cold out there... but there's no place like HOME.

***The CNOY toque is a classic event tradition! You'll love being part of the crowd of walkers sporting a cosy head on CNOY Night



I want to help provide meals and other vital services to the Windsor and Essex County area's homeless.

- \$19.92 to help 6 people
- \$39.84 to help 12 people
- \$59.76 to help 18 people
- \$79.68 to help 24 people

\$..... to feed and care for as many people as possible

Please charge my gift on my credit card (SEE RIGHT)

Please make cheques payable to:

Windsor Downtown Mission

YES

I want to help a hungry, homeless or hurting neighbour today

I would like to make a donation of \$ _____ One time donation Monthly donation

Please charge my gift on my credit card: Card # _____ - _____ - _____ - _____

Expiry Date: _____ / _____ CVV: _____

I support the work of the Windsor Downtown Mission and enclose my donation of \$ _____

Name: _____

Street: _____ Apt#: _____

City: _____ Prov: _____ Postal Code: _____

Telephone: _____ Email: _____

Visit www.downtownmission.com for more information or to make a secure online donation (Registered Charity #119260420RR0001)

The Downtown Mission issues charitable donation receipts for all monetary donations.

THE UNITED CHURCH DOWNTOWN MISSION OF WINDSOR INC. - 664 Victoria Avenue, Windsor, ON. N9A 4N2 (519-973-5573)

