



Rainy River District Social Services Administration Board

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- Children's Services
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Large Shelter Donation Made by Local Communities

The Fort Frances Homeless Committee received its largest donation to date in support of opening an Out of the Cold shelter – and they have the ten First Nations of the southern Treaty Three to thank. The committee received word of a \$25,000 donation in the days following the Longest Night of the Year Homeless Sleep Out event on Scott Street.

Weechi-it-te-win was instrumental in making the gravity of the issue of homelessness known at a meeting with the chiefs of the ten First Nation Communities. The chiefs of the area First Nations made this donation in support those experiencing homelessness in the district and allowing the homeless committee to achieve the goal of opening an Out of the Cold shelter this winter.

The Longest Night of the Year event raised just shy of \$18,000 toward opening a shelter. This donation places the Homeless Committee at just \$12,000 short of their goal of \$55,000. The donations are going directly toward shelter costs, the bulk of costs coming from staffing the shelter. This will allow the shelter to be opened 3 nights per week to begin, with the committee's goal of adding more nights for this winter, and establishing a permanent shelter solution in the future. "We are very grateful to have the support of these communities in establishing a shelter and excited to have this partnership," said Jamie Petrin, co-chair of the Fort Frances Homeless Committee.

The communities who have offered their support include Lac La Croix, Seine River, Nigigoonsiminikaaning, Couchiching, Mitaanjigamiing, Naicatchewenin, Rainy River First Nations, Big Grassy, Big Island and Onigaming.

"We are all impacted by the issue of homelessness in this district. People need to have a safe place to sleep in order to become well and active members of our community," said Laurie Rose, Executive Director for Weechi-it-te-win Family Services.

Not stopping at a donation, these communities are also offering a challenge to the business community of the Rainy River District. The challenge is for businesses across the district to make up the \$12,000 to open the shelter.

Thank you for providing the opportunity to further address the issue of homelessness in Fort Frances.

For information on donation and challenge, please contact Dean Wilson, Director of Administration for Weechi-it-te-win Family Services at dean.wilson@weechi.ca or 807-274-3201 x 4041.

For information on the shelter and homeless committee, please contact Jamie Petrin at jpetrin@rrdssab.on.ca or 807-274-5349 x 248.