REPORT 1

DRAFT June 10, 2021

**CARING COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVE PERTH (CCHIP)**

There is currently a waitlist of 773 requests for affordable housing (RGI or rent geared to income) in our County with 362 applications on the waitlist for the town of Perth (1).

Those without safe and affordable housing (housing costing no more than 30% of their household income that is in good repair and meets all safety codes) are:

* less likely to find and keep steady employment to support themselves and their families.
* more vulnerable to health, social and developmental impediments
* less able to follow the necessary public health and isolation guidelines such as those required of us during a global pandemic – thereby further endangering their own health.

There currently is not enough housing stock in our town and county to meet this need. In 2021 Lanark County has approved no increase in “social” or affordable housing stock (2).  Local Landlords need sustainable rental income, and many are unable or unwilling to meet the call to offer more safe, affordable and comfortable spaces available, due, in part to the cost of renovations and a concern about the need for subsequent repairs to their properties during or after a tenancy.  So… WE WANT TO HELP.

We would use a model of success in Community Action. In the fall 2015 committed members of our community came together to form the Community Alliance for Refugee Resettlement (CARR) to answer the call made by our Prime Minister to reach out to refugee families desperately needing to flee the violence and discord in Syria and help them find a home in Canada.  Canadians had been sponsoring refugees for years but in 2015 there was a new sense of urgency and a terrible image of a little boy who drowned on his way to a better life spurred many into action.

In 4 months, the CARR raised $150,000.00 (which the Perth and District Community Foundation (PDCF) managed and invested and increased to over $175,000.00). Over the four-year project with the help of over 150 volunteers 4 rental homes were found and renovated (furnishing and fully equipping them) for 4 families in 4 years.

**PROPOSAL**

To gather members of the Perth Community to work to create new units of safe, affordable, and secure housing each year for 3 years – from the existing housing stock - and support our neighbours in their new homes, the Committee will:

**PROJECT ELEMENTS**

1. Raise awareness about the need for more safe, affordable, and comfortable housing in our community.
2. Assemble a talented and committed leadership team (including a local professional construction company) to steer this project, set policy and manageable budgets and keep the wider community regularly informed of our efforts.
3. Raise at least $300,000.00 for renovation and maintenance with the help of the Perth and District Community Foundation, local churches, community partners and generous individuals.
4. Determine the feasibility of:

* Working with Landlords of existing housing stock in Perth to enter into a minimum multi-year partnership to allow us to renovate and guarantee the maintenance of the new unit(s) created for in exchange for a minimum commitment to rent the unit(s) to tenants under the Lanark County Housing Subsidy Programme or rent at a reduced rate affordable to those receiving rental assistance funds (30% or less than their total household income).  After the term of the agreement all improvements to the properties will be free and clear assets of the landlord to do with as they wish.
* Raising funds for the purchasing property to be renovated and to be managed by a local Not for Profit organization to provide long-term stable, secure and affordable rental housing
* The assessment of at least one building/property per year with a view to
  1. Improving the property to meet all health, safety, and energy efficiency standards.
  2. Expanding the initiative to make more rental units available in our town for those on the Lanark County affordable housing wait list - which would include at least one multi-bedroom unit.
  3. Working to make one of the newly renovated or created units fully accessible.

1. Use the expertise of a construction management team and volunteers to complete the work within an annual budget set by the leadership team.
2. Recruit, screen and equip a group of resourceful and caring volunteers as “allies” to support tenants in their new homes and help connect them to other resources, agencies and programmes.

**HOW YOU CAN HELP**

1. CONSIDER DONATING FUNDS TO THE *CCHIP* FUND AT THE PERTH AND DISTRICT COMMUNITY FOUNDATION (PDCF)
2. CONSIDER OFFERING A PROPERTY YOU OWN AS A POTENTIAL SITE FOR OUR FIRST NEW AFFORDABLE HOMES
3. CONSIDER DONATING BUILDING MATERIALS, NEW APPLIANCES OR BUILDING TRADES (PLUMBING, ELECTRICAL, PAINTING) WORK
4. CONSIDER OFFERING YOUR TIME AND TALENT AS A VOLUNTEER:

* TO HELP RENOVATE AND EXPAND AT LEAST ONE PROPERTY THIS YEAR
* TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THIS INITIATIVE
* TO HELP WITH, PLANNING, ADMINISTRATION, WRITE AGREEMENTS AND APPROACH LANDLORDS
* INTEREST IN STORING, GATHERING OR PURCHASING HOUSEHOLD ITEMS AS NEEDED
* TO BE A “CONNECTOR” AND ALLY FOR OUR NEW TENANTS AS PART OF A SUPPORT TEAM

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1. *Figures from Lanark County as of 29 April 2021*
2. *Table 39 of the Recommended Schedule for increase to Social Housing – approved by Lanark County Council*