

Friends Family Communique – Issue #2

Welcome to Friends Housing's second edition of its **residents' family newsletter**, designed to help keep families up-to-date on key relevant issues. Given the new venture, we are particularly interested in your feedback. If you already haven't shared your thoughts, we'd love to hear what you like, what you don't like and what you would like to see more of. And, if someone isn't currently getting it - and wants to - we want to know that too so they can be added to our distribution list. Only through this can we strengthen residents' family's knowledge and support of their loved one(s) living at Friends Housing. Contact: Crystal Phillips, Mental Health Director at 204-832-2254 (phone) or friendshousing.cp@gmail.com (email).

And if too, you want your name added to the distribution list for **The Voice**, the residents' bimonthly newsletter/calendar of events OR are experiencing problems getting your copies, contact Loveeza Arshad, Activity Worker at 204-953-1161(phone) or aloveeza@gmail.com (email).

Here are key things of direct interest/applicability to you as a key family member...along with some "good to know" information which we hope helps enable more meaningful conversations and/or greater support.

Property Management and Administration

A Princess at Friends Housing?!

In late January, Princess (the dog) arrived! Princess is the 3-year old chihuahua/pomeranian cross under the care and watchful eyes of resident caretakers, Annette and Eddy. Since her arrival, she has been getting acquainted and spending time with residents and staff as well as undergoing a training regime with a goal of passing the Canadian Kennel Club-approved, 12-step "Good Neighbour Behavioural Test." In two months, if successful in making the grade when tested by an external evaluator, the Board will grant Princess "resident" status. (Note: Friends Housing continues to uphold its pet-free policy as most recently outlined in the Friends Family Communique, Issue #1; October 2017. Princess was given special Board approval due to unusual circumstances, ie. the recognized health benefits of pet therapy and the central role the caretakers play in the life of Friends.)

Building Maintenance and Administration

The reason we hired Murdoch Management this past July was to help us manage the building and the expenses of operating the building, as well as to improve our relationship with our major funder, Manitoba Housing who had concerns about prior gaps in our management. For the

current year, Murdoch is focussing on getting the management of the building and the expenses on a stable footing (following consistent rent calculation policies and sticking to budgeted expenses as two examples), before proceeding with upgrades or major maintenance items. Their taking on this role allows the Board to focus more on making the mental health support the best it can be.

Murdoch Management collects rent on the first business day of each month from 11am to 12noon in the Board/Art Room for those residents paying their rent in this manner. Reminder notices (which until January 2018 were delivered to each resident) have since been discontinued, and replaced by the posting of a monthly reminder notice on the bulletin board outside the Common Room.

WiFi

Friends Housing is pleased to announce it now has WIFI on the main floor of the apartment building (and also on the second floor, albeit with a weaker signal). The password is friends890. Make a note of it and maybe try it out on your next visit!

Since our last newsletter, Shaw, our building's internet service provider, suggested that they could install low-cost wireless internet service to the whole building, which was going to be at no cost to residents. However, during installation it was discovered there was too much concrete in the building for the building-wide wireless service to work, resulting in the wireless service being installed but only working in the above-mentioned areas of the building.

Any questions/concerns regarding property management/administration should be directed to Dennis Trochim, Property Manager, Murdoch Management at 204-982-2014 (phone) or dennis@lifelease.ca (email).

Mental Health and Activities/Events

Income Tax Help For Residents

For a third straight year, we are very grateful to have volunteer Marsha Dozar help interested Friends Housing residents on Employment Income Assistance (EIA) complete and file their **2017 income tax claim** - at no charge. This will take place at Friends Housing on Thursday, March 8 between 11am and 4:00pm. An appointment is required. Contact Crystal (see contact details above) to make an appointment or for more information.

Did you know... In early January 2018, Canada Revenue Agency (CRA) announced that it is tweaking its tax return process for 950,000 Canadians with low or fixed incomes that have remained basically unchanged for a length of time. Eligible individuals for this new "**File My**

Return” service were being notified by mail by mid-February 2018 and can choose to file their tax return by telephone if they wish. For more details, contact CRA or visit their website.

Wills and Living Wills Presentation - For Residents and Their Families

Whatever your age or life circumstance, you should have a will. Learn what your will should include, what the formal requirements are, who should be your executor, and what happens if you die without a will. When someone dies, there are often many things to take care of regarding that person’s estate. Learn how various estate assets are dealt with, when a will must be probated, what happens when there is no will, etc. Residents and their families are encouraged to attend.

Date and Time: Tuesday, March 6, 2018 from 2:00 – 3:30pm

Location: Common Room, Friends Housing

Speaker: Representative from Community Legal Education Association

Cost: Free

If possible, please advise Crystal (see contact information above) if you plan to attend.

A Change for Friends Housing Tenant Association

In response to tenant requests, an election was held in late February re: a possible change to the composition of the Friends Housing residents’ Tenant Association (TA) executive.

Specifically, the question was: Should the executive remain “as is,” ie. with three positions, ie. President, Treasurer and Secretary OR be expanded to include other tenant member(s) whose role it would be to provide input into residents’ events/activities? Voting has ended, votes have been tallied with the result being that effective April 1, 2018, there will be an **“expanded”**

Tenant Association executive.

Fundraising

As with any not-for-profit organization, fundraising is an ongoing concern for Friends Housing. To that end, a special board meeting was recently held to discuss the issue. The Board sees two types of fundraising going forward – one being the usual **ongoing fundraising** to support recreational activities and classes for residents and the other being **special project fundraising** (a current example being fundraising for new furniture for the Common Room to replace the old and worn furniture in this well-used space). As other special project fundraising plans are made, we will keep you apprised.

Related to this, any and all financial donations - big or small, by individuals or businesses - are always gratefully accepted and we are pleased to issue a charitable receipt for tax purposes. As well, “goods in kind” donations are also appreciated. A **current need in this regard is two gently used, relatively new computers and a printer for residents’ use** needed to replace the very old equipment we currently have.

FRIENDS HOUSING INC.
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204-953-1160 (ph)/204-953-1162 (fax)
fhousing@mymts.net (email);

If you or anyone you know wishes more information or to make a donation - monetary or “goods in kind” like computer equipment - contact Crystal (see contact details above).

Next Issue: End of May 2018