

## **Friends' Family Communiqué – Issue #3**

Welcome to Issue #3! We hope you find the information of interest as an integral part of our Friends' Housing "Family." Thanks to those who have provided feedback on our previous issues. We invite and encourage others to do the same as we continue with this relatively new initiative whose aim it is to improve communication with families of Friends Housing residents in order to better help support Friends Housing residents live their best life possible. Contact: Crystal or any Board member.

### **Mark Your Calendar!**

When Board members and staff know residents' key family members better - and when residents' family members know Board members and staff better, it can only benefit residents. To this end, the Board will be doing more advance planning - and communication - of events of importance and relevance to families, recognizing the fact that family members have busy lives of their own and many do not live in Winnipeg or even in Manitoba. We hope you will mark your calendar (maybe even begin making travel plans if you live out of town) to join us at one or both of these upcoming events:

- ! **Family BBQ – Thursday, August 23 at noon**
- ! **Annual General Meeting – Thursday, October 18 at 5:30 pm**

Details regarding location, etc will follow. Contact Crystal should you wish more information in the interim.

### **New Faces At Friends Housing**

It's that time of year again when one can expect to see a new face or two at Friends Housing. This year is no exception.

Marie, a soon-to-graduate from the Community Support Worker program at Robertson College, has begun a 4-week practicum (May 22-June 18), assisting Loveeza and Crystal with tenant activities.

Then, for the months of July and August, a post-secondary student will be here to continue assisting with the full and varied schedule of summer activities for tenants. Partial funding for this position was made possible by the federal government's Canada Summer Jobs grant program. Currently, interviews are being done, with the hopes of hiring this person by early June. Any questions should be directed to Crystal.

### **Update on The Princess**

We're not talking British royalty here, but rather Princess who, as mentioned in the last newsletter, is currently the canine-in-training hoping to achieve "special resident status" at Friends Housing. Having now completed 6 of the 12 classes toward achieving her Canine Good

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Neighbour certificate, Princess' work, under the direction of resident caretakers Eddy and Annette, is still in progress.

### **Annual Building Fire Safety Inspection**

Testing of all fire and smoke detectors in the building – ie. those in public areas and in individual apartments was conducted in April. This not only helps ensure our building is safe and up to code for safety purposes, but also serves as a reminder to staff and tenants regarding fire safety policy and procedures. A “What To Do in the Event of a Fire” information sheet is posted beside every elevator in the apartment building. As well, residents were previously given a copy and encouraged to post it on the inside of their apartment door. Contact Murdoch Management (204-982-2014) if any questions/concerns.

### **New Computers and Printer for Residents**

Thanks to the **Computers For Schools Manitoba (CFS) program**, Friends Housing residents now have two “new-to-us,” refurbished computers (set up and ready for use in the Art Room) and one printer (soon to be set up) - replacing the very old and outdated ones. Having this newer equipment – along with internet (WiFi) accessible on-site - makes it easy for interested residents to keep abreast of new technology, access information, research topics of interest, help with personal business matters, etc – without necessarily having to own their own personal computer (and all its related costs).

Side Note: Since its establishment in 1993, CFS Manitoba, a not-for-profit organization has been gathering gently used computer equipment (donated by governments, businesses and individuals), refurbishing it, and making it available to schools, libraries and registered not-for-profit learning organizations such as Friends Housing at no or nominal cost. For more information about CFS, visit their website: [c4smb.ca](http://c4smb.ca)

### **Rents Will Be Increasing – For Some Tenants**

The Manitoba government recently announced that they will be hiking rents for some residents in government housing (which includes Friends Housing). It will NOT affect those on Employment Assistance Income (EIA). However, those who are affected (ie. those 65 years of age and older on Canada Pension Plan and/or those with other sources of income) will see their rent increase by 2% of their income (ie. from 28% to 30%). And although the government indicated the increase takes effect November 1, 2018, any Friends Housing residents for whom this applies to will get a 2-month reprieve, ie. it won't happen until January 1, 2019 when annual leases at Friends Housing are renewed. Friends Housing tenants and expect to get a 3 months' advance notice from Murdoch Management prior to this rent change. Contact Dennis Trochim, Property Manager, Murdoch Management (204-982-4509) for more information.

### **Tenant Association Reverses Motion**

Further to last newsletter's note about a change to the Executive of the Tenant Association that would see an increased number of residents involved on the Executive, the motion has since been rescinded. Tenancy changes and challenges in volunteer recruitment to fill the increased number of positions lead to residents deciding to maintain the status quo. For more information, contact Crystal.

### **Friends Housing Profile\*: John Gosselin, Board Chairman**

**1. How long you have held this position?**

I joined the Board in February, 2013 and became Board Chair in July of that year after both the Executive Director and the Board Chair resigned.

**2. Tell us a little bit about your background.**

I moved to Winnipeg in 1982 from Toronto, where I grew up. It was a work transfer to the Canadian head office of my employer, Cargill Limited. I worked in accounting and information technology (and currently, am retired). I've been married to Vicki Burns, a former Executive Director of the Winnipeg Humane Society for 28 years and have two stepsons - Tim and Todd as well as four lively grandchildren aged seven to one. I have been on two other Boards - the Manitoba Sailing Association and the John Howard Society of Manitoba, and currently also volunteer playing guitar and singing at Riverview Health Centre.

**3. What was your reason(s) for getting involved on Friends Housing Board?**

At a time when I was looking for another volunteer opportunity, my next-door neighbour, Herb Schon, a long-term Friends Housing Board member asked over the fence if I would be willing to join the Board. It seemed like a worthwhile organization, so I did.

**4. What do you enjoy most about being on the Board?**

Meeting the residents of Friends and being a part of keeping Friends going is very rewarding. Housing is a key part of healthy and satisfying living, and I'm really pleased to be able to help provide this independent housing.

**5. What do you see as the biggest challenge facing the Board/Friends Housing?**

Our biggest challenge will be the transition to a different funding structure when our mortgage is paid off, and our agreement with Manitoba Housing ends, in July of 2024. We currently have no concrete plans for this transition but resources are available to help in this planning.

**6. What do you see as the biggest accomplishment you have helped make happen for the Board and Friends Housing - and why?**

The thing I am most pleased about is the change to have professional property managers look after the duties of landlord. There was more and more accountability being requested from Manitoba Housing, our main funder, and the skills that Murdoch Management bring, along with their volume purchasing of support services, means we can operate much more efficiently. It was not an easy change, but it has been the right

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one. This also means the Board can concentrate on the mental health support services that are unique to Friends.

7. **What is one thing you would like Friends Housing families to know - and one thing they can do - to support the work of the Board?**

I would like families to know that they can contact the Board anytime with ideas they have for improvement of life at Friends. I personally can be reached at 204-488-1237(phone) or [jgosseli@mts.net](mailto:jgosseli@mts.net) (email) – and look forward to hearing your ideas.

\* **Friends Housing Profile** will be an ongoing series featuring Board members, staff and other volunteers.