

Friends' Family Communique - October 2017

A warm hello to family members of Friends Housing residents!

Introduction:

We understand the importance of communicating with key family members of Friends Housing residents such as yourself. We also acknowledge the fact we have not done the greatest job of doing so in the past – and for that, we apologize. We are committed to doing a much better job of it.

Better informed families helps ensure more meaningful conversations with their loved one(s), helps provide the best possible support he/she needs, and gives families peace of mind knowing Friends Housing is a well-run, caring, compassionate, supportive and stimulating living environment for your family member.

So, beginning with this Friends' Family Communique (the first of more to come – every three months or so), we plan to use this as a means to keep families up-to-date on important and relevant information.

We also know that communication is a two-way street. So, as we strive to better communicate with families, we invite and welcome your feedback - good or bad - on this first Friends' Family Communique. We'd also love to hear suggestions for improvement. Call us at 204-953-1160, or email us at friendshousing.cp@gmail.com or fhousing@mymts.net or write us. Together, let's make this the best possible communication tool.

Note: **The Voice**, the longstanding Friends Housing newsletter targeted to residents (but also available to any interested others upon request), will continue as usual, being published every 2 months or so. Those already on the subscriber list will continue to get it. Those currently not on the list but wishing to get it should contact Loveeza at 204-953-1161 or email aloveeza@gmail.com

Staff and Management Update

Early July brought a major change in our administration. As we said goodbye to Executive Director Edward Harting and our caretaker, we said hello to **Murdoch Management**, a property management firm that provides the landlord-related services required by Friends Housing. Well-known for such work in Winnipeg's social housing community, their role in property management includes looking after building maintenance and repairs, collection of rent payments and finding future tenants. They will also oversee the newly hired, part-time resident caretakers **Eddy and Annette Zolondek** who recently moved into a suite at Friends Housing to help provide on-site support. Residents had a chance to meet Dennis Trochim, Property Manager with Murdoch Management at a residents' meeting this past summer, learning firsthand of the changes. (FYI, all residents were encouraged to put the provided fridge magnet containing the emergency number to call, if needed, on their fridge. The phone line, staffed 24/7/365 is 204-781-2002. For any non-emergency suite maintenance/repair issues, residents are now to fill out a simple form with basic details and then deposit it in a box on the wall between the Common Room and Craft Room. (This box will be checked daily and forms forwarded to Murdoch Management.)

Given the change - and being standard procedure for security reasons - all locks in the building, ie. the external building door locks and suite door **locks were changed** in mid-September. Should any family wish a copy of key(s), they must first discuss and get approval from their family member, after which they should contact Dennis at 204-982-2014 (ph).

For more information about Murdoch Management, visit lifelease.ca.

The **Mental Health Support** function at Friends has not changed.

Crystal Phillips, Mental Health Director (204-832-2254) works full-time, Monday through Friday. She primarily looks after “anything mental health-related” (eg. counselling, helping residents deal with challenges they face, finding appropriate resources), serves as liaison person for families, and helps with other organizational needs.

Loveeza Arshad, Activity Worker (204-953-1161) works part-time, Monday through Friday. Her primary responsibilities are organizing and leading resident activities and creating The Voice newsletter.

Important Information

- Murdoch Management, in order to prepare the **2018 tenant leases** (ie. for the January 1 – December 31, 2018 period), in a letter to residents dated August 30, 2017, advised tenants that they must provide them with the most current “CERTIFIED Income Tax Report – Option C” and “Documentation of Household Income Sources” (eg. EIA benefit letters, CPP or other pension benefits letter from Service Canada) by no later than October 31, 2017. This is extremely important and required immediate action as the documentation from government sources takes some weeks to get. Family members are strongly encouraged to ensure their family member – providing help if needed – sees this is done on time to prevent potentially serious consequences.
- With Friends Housing recently becoming aware that it has been subsidizing the cost of tenants’ TV and internet costs (which it cannot afford to continue doing), there are two 2018 tenant lease (and rent) - related changes:
 1. Friends Housing will continue to provide **basic cable TV** service (through our discounted bulk service for TV) to all suites but the tenant cost will increase to \$30/month on January 1. This amount will be included - as done in the past - in the monthly rental fee.
 2. Friends Housing will no longer provide free internet service to all suites as of January 1. However, residents will have **free internet access (WIFI)** in the Common Room and **upgraded computers** in the Craft Room beginning January 1. Any tenants wishing to have internet service in their suite must arrange for and pay directly to their service provider.
- Friends Housing has had a “**no pet**” policy (exceptions: a bird or fish) for several years. The existing dog and cat owner residents who were “grandfathered in” before this policy are allowed to keep their pet for the life of that pet – and only that pet.

Upcoming Events

- A **Thanksgiving potluck lunch** for residents is happening on Friday, October 6. A sign up sheet is posted. Everyone attending is to sign up and indicate what food they are bringing. (We don't want this to be a barrier to participation for non-cooks. Know that bringing something like a store bought pie or a dozen dinner rolls is a very acceptable contribution.) We would love you to encourage your family member to take part!
- Our **Friends Housing Annual General Meeting** is on Thursday, October 19 at 5:30pm in the Common Room. This is a great chance to meet and learn more from Board members, staff, residents and their family members over a cup of coffee and light refreshments. For those interested in attending, please call 204-953-1160 or 204-832-2254 so we know how many to expect. We hope to see a good-sized crowd.
- Planning for our **annual Christmas event** is underway. Details will follow shortly. As well, if you would be willing to donate a gift or door prize for the event, we would be very grateful. Call us if you want more information or wish to donate.

Help Wanted

- Want to help by **volunteering** your time and expertise to Friends Housing? Become a Board member... or volunteer in some other way (eg. help with dinners, crafts, etc). For more information, contact Crystal at 204-832-2254. (Crystal will forward Board-related enquiries and expressions of interest to the Board.)
- As you no doubt know, the many and varied activities made available to residents help keep bodies active and healthy and minds sharper. They also help build "community" amongst residents. With limited, fixed incomes for many, participating can be cost-prohibitive. Friends Housing's modest activities budget too can only be stretched so far (and we do try to keep costs in check). We ask you, as family members, to consider opening your hearts and wallets to enable us to continue to offer this important support. Any and all **donations**, big or small, are much appreciated. Cheques should be made out to "Friends Housing." An income tax receipt will be issued for all donations.

So, What Do You Think?

With this inaugural issue of Friends' Family Communique, we invite you to let us know if you wish to continue to see subsequent issues in your mailbox (or inbox) every couple of months, any comments you have on this issue, and/or any suggestions for future issues.

Lastly, anytime you have questions or concerns, we want to know. We hope you will join us in our goal to get in touch and stay in touch.

Regards,
Crystal Phillips
Mental Health Director
204-832-2254 (phone)
friendshousing.cp@gmail.com

Loveeza Arshad
Activity Worker
204-953-1161 (phone)
aloveeza@gmail.com