
Family Communique - Issue #7 (October 2019)

We're back!

Now back from a hiatus (the information below in this longer-than-usual issue will help explain what we've been busy with over the past 6 months), we're back on track with our quarterly newsletters, a key means by which we communicate with residents' families. We appreciate your understanding. Remember too, if there is ever anything you need or want to know, we're only a phone call or email away.

People at Friends Housing: Comings and Goings

A number of "people changes" at Friends Housing have occurred over the past few months - in both the Activity and Maintenance (Caretaker) areas.

Owen Jarva was back as our Summer Student helping with the Activity Program in July and August. Having been with us last year, he was able to hit the ground running. And, when **Loveeza Arshad**, Activity Coordinator for the past three years left Friends Housing in June to focus more on her university studies and yoga practice, he was able to nicely fill in. Loveeza left her mark on Friends Housing - including the "All About Me" project she initiated. It is one where each resident develops - with assistance as desired/needed - an infosheet which has such headings as: "In the past I..., I enjoy..., I don't like..., and A typical day for me could include..." The goal: to enable staff (existing and new) to better and more quickly know and understand residents as unique individuals. This project is scheduled to be completed in 2020.

We're also pleased to have **Dana Herman** join us as Activity Coordinator. Here since August 26, we look forward to her ideas and energy in building upon the Activity Program's success to date. Dana can be reached at 204-953-1161 (ph) or friendshousing.dh@gmail.com (email).

We're also pleased to have **James Botaitis** as our caretaker as of June 1. He's generally on site Monday-Friday from 10am to 2pm (excluding statutory holidays). His prior experience working in an environment having people with disabilities has helped make the transition go smoothly. If anything building maintenance-related is needed, the procedure remains the same. Specifically, for non-emergency issues, residents should fill out a work order form and deposit it in the box. (Forms and box are located just outside the Common Room.) For an emergency building maintenance issue, contact Murdoch Management at 204-781-2002.

The Board felt a change of caretakers was necessary. Eddy and Annette left the employment of Friends Housing on May 3, but continued to legally occupy their suite until the end of June. James and his wife live nearby, and preferred not to live on-site. Thus, the caretaker suite can now accommodate an additional Friends Housing resident.

For Your Calendar

Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, October 23, 2019

Time: 5:30pm

Place: Common Room, Friends Housing

Friends Housing Inc.

100-890 Sturgeon Road, Winnipeg, MB, R2Y0L2

204-953-1160 (ph)

204-953-1162 (fax)

fhousing@mts.net (email)

friendshousinginc.ca (website)

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Please join us to learn more - and meet (or get reacquainted) with Board members, staff, residents and their families. In addition, our guest speaker, Aly Raposo, Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba will address the topic, "Self Care."

Friends' Family Christmas Celebration

Immediate and extended family members are invited to what's become a much-anticipated "event of the year."

Date: Saturday, December 14, 2019

Time: 6:00pm

Place: Maranatha Church (right next door - and with lots of parking)

Entertainment, silent auction, bake sale and festive holiday sweets await! We hope you can join us. Please RSVP by December 6 to Crystal at 204-832-2254 (ph) or friendshousing.cp@gmail.com (email). Be sure to read the "Ways YOU Can Help Bring Christmas Joy to Friends Housing" article below for more details!

Note: As per usual, this event will immediately follow a Residents' Christmas Dinner taking place at 5:00pm.

Ways YOU Can Help Bring Christmas Joy to Friends Housing

#1 Join your resident family member at Friends' Christmas Celebration '19 - and why not bring another family member (or two) with you this year!

#2 Donate an item(s) to the silent auction. Need ideas? Gift certificates are always popular; so are "theme" gift baskets (eg. Beauty Basket - body wash, bubble bath, soap, shampoo, loofah, lotion, etc; Bookworm Basket - gift certificate to a bookstore, selection of teas, mug, a pair of cozy socks; Eat Manitoba - a variety of non-perishable, Manitoba-made/grown food items). Items should be to Friends Housing by December 6.

#3 Bid on a silent auction item - or two. Maybe even have a little fun by engaging in a friendly bidding war with a fellow bidder!

#4 Save time by picking up some cookies, breads or other yummy Christmas treats from the Bake Sale table.

#5 Bring your chequebook and/or cash. These will be the only two accepted payment methods at the event. And while that chequebook or wallet is out, why not consider a donation to Friends Housing. In return, you'll get a charitable receipt for income tax purposes - AND a warm, fuzzy feeling knowing you're helping support a cause that's near and dear.

Unable to attend the event? Don't let that prevent you from getting in the festive spirit!

Suggestion #5 above can still work - with just an envelope and postage stamp!

Whether one, two or all five ways, we thank you in advance for your support. For more information, contact Crystal (see contact details above).

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Looking Ahead: Future Building Needs

The Board of Directors had a special meeting in July with our Manitoba Housing representative to discuss increasing our funding to allow for future capital spending needs. (We previously hired engineering consultants to develop a 30-year plan describing the requirements and associated costs to maintain our buildings in good condition.) Having now shared this plan, we await their response - and hope to share good news about it at our AGM. A commitment for full funding would be a big step towards ensuring the long term sustainability of Friends Housing. For more information, contact John Gosselin, Chair at 204-488-1237(ph) or jgosseli@mts.net (email).

A New Board Initiative

The Board is pleased to have a very good and solid relationship with both our key funders, ie. Manitoba Housing and Manitoba Health. We are very thankful they have both been with us, supporting us, since our beginnings back in 1990. We are also very happy to have Murdoch Management, for the past two years now, ably looking after our day-to-day operations and finances.

With those in place, the Board is able to move onto other tasks. One such task is identifying (including prioritizing) some “extra” or additional things that would be of benefit to our residents, developing a fundraising plan for them... and then making it happen! A couple of needs identified so far include a new van (our existing one is deemed needing replacement in a year or so) and replacement of the existing Common Room furniture. Expect to hear more about this initiative in the not-too-distant future. If any readers have any suggestions, please forward them to John Gosselin (204-488-1237 (ph) or jgosseli@mts.net (email)).

New “Families” Webpage Now on the Website

Are you/your family new (or newer) to Friends Housing? Maybe you just want to refer back to information you recall reading in a back issue of Friends Family Communique (FFC). Well, it's now easier than ever to get what you need. Check out the new “Families” webpage on Friends Housing's website, friendshousinginc.ca

Our New Friends Housing Gallery Wall

Since late August, the front foyer of the Friends Housing building has a new “addition” - a gallery wall - which brings together, in one central space, the various plaques, awards, “official opening of building” letter, etc which previously had been scattered around the Common Room. Its centrepiece is the new, large, attractively framed September 24, 1989 Free Press Weekly article about the then “soon to open” Friends Housing apartment building - including quotes from Helga Berger, its first Manager and Executive Director. A sincere thanks to Helga's son, Mike Berger who, without hesitation, upon learning of the article's existence, ordered it, had it framed and generously donated it to Friends Housing. It is a very fitting piece which speaks to our building's beginnings. Take a look next time you're in the building.

Friends Housing Profile*: Mike Berger, Brother of A Resident**Can you give us a little background?**

My mother, Helga Berger, was instrumental in the creation of Friends Housing and was also its first manager. (Editor's Note: see article on "gallery wall" above for more information.) My brother was one of the original residents and still lives there today. My father lived in Winnipeg until he passed away last year, and was great support for my brother. I moved out west 45 years ago and have lived in Kelowna, BC since 1976. With my brother and I both seniors now, it has added a whole new set of issues.

How did the transition from "parental support" to "sibling support" take place?

The last several years, my father was getting quite frail and confused, and at that time, not only did my support role for him grow significantly, but I realized I needed to play a more significant role in my brother's life too. I also - on one of my many trips to Winnipeg during this period - got Power of Attorney (POA) for both of them too. Though that proved challenging - with lengthy personal interviews with lawyers and written statements from doctors, the POA was essential to manage their affairs - everything from phone/TV hookups to banking to dealing with Revenue Canada. Once I was on all the accounts though, it became much easier, ie. business could be done online. I highly recommend getting POA in place as early as possible - ideally, before you need it.

With 2000 kilometres physically separating you and your brother, what gives you peace of mind knowing that your brother is doing well and his needs are met?

In a nutshell - a great support team in Winnipeg. The staff at Friends Housing are #1. Secondly, the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority team have been impressive - the extent of support provided and their catching problems before they develop. Thirdly, hiring a local "senior service provider" to visit my brother weekly and help him with anything he needs has been invaluable in filling the gaps in service. (I first found and began using this private company for my dad when, after having given up his driver's licence, needed to be checked up on, taken shopping, to the bank, to appointments, and to visit my brother. After my dad passed away and since my brother knew and liked them, I've continued to use their services to help my brother.) And fourthly, though my cousin lives quite far from Friends Housing, she is another important person on the "care team." Because of all these great people, I sleep well knowing, with full confidence, that my brother is safe and has the best of care.

*Friends Housing Profile is an ongoing series featuring Board members, staff, family and other volunteers.

Next Issue: Early February 2020