

Friends' Family Communique - Issue #4

Welcome to Issue #4. Just as we continue to hope you find these quarterly communiques informative and interesting, we continue - now a year since our first issue - to view it as a "work in progress." Continuous improvement remains a key aim. So, please keep providing your feedback (positive and not-so-positive) and ideas - to John Gosselin, Board Chair (204-488-1237- ph; jgosseli@mts.net - email), any other Board member (see our website for the list of Board members) or Crystal, Mental Health Director (204-832-2254-ph; friendshousing.cp@gmail.com - email).

Friends Housing Rules and Regulations

As with any well-managed and well-run building, Friends Housing has had Rules and Regulations in place since its early days, updating them on an ongoing basis. A 20-page copy of the most recent update (dated June 28, 2018) was given to all residents and is attached to this newsletter.

The Board wishes to bring to your attention, due to a relatively recent, difficult situation, **Regulation 2.07 – Death of A Tenant.**

This regulation basically is as follows: If it is suspected that a death of a tenant living alone may have occurred in a suite, the police and/or ambulance service should be called immediately, i.e. call 911. Then, right afterward, Murdoch Management should be called at their 24/7/365 emergency number, i.e. 204-781-2002.

The standard procedure required in the actual death is for Management (i.e. Murdoch Management) to change the locks and secure the suite to ensure the tenant's personal property is not removed by anyone other than the executor of the estate. (Note: This is the case whether the tenant dies in the suite or anywhere else.) Knowing this in advance can prevent some discomfort by one's family/friends.

If a death is confirmed (usually done by the Coroner's Office), the police or Coroner's Office is responsible for notifying next of kin. Murdoch Management can ONLY issue access to the executor of the estate and ONLY upon his/her presentation of proof of executorship, i.e. a copy of the current will plus government-issued photo identification (eg. current driver's license).

Furthermore, in the event of a death and prior to keys being issued to the executor, Murdoch Management has a legal right to enter the suite but only in the event of a property emergency (e.g. running water, burst pipe, fire, etc).

The length of time a suite must remain secured depends on how long it takes to find the executor. (Note: Manitoba tenancy legislation requires that a tenant's belongings be held for 60 days after which they can be removed and put in storage, and the suite prepared for re-rental.)

The executor is required to provide proper notice to vacate to Murdoch Management. In the event of death of a tenant, the notice period can be as short as one full calendar month. The estate is responsible for the suite - and rent - in the interim.

The four key “take away” messages for residents and families:

1. The **ONLY** way to have an executor is to have a will. When having a will drawn up (or revised), serious consideration should be given to name **two** executors should one, for some reason(s), later be unable or unwilling to fulfil that role.
2. Families are strongly encouraged to stress not only the importance to their family member(s) in getting a proper will drawn up but also in keeping it up-to-date – providing guidance and support as needed. It will bring peace of mind to all knowing their personal wishes will be carried out. There are many lawyers that can help with this. As well, Community Legal Education Association provides a free service for legal information and advice. Their phone number is 204-943-2382 and their website is communitylegal.mb.ca (click on “Unrepresented Litigants,” then click on “Wills and Estates” for great resources).
3. All residents are encouraged to ensure Friends Housing always has an up-to-date copy of their will to help ensure quick and easy access to important information to facilitate arrangements if it’s ever needed. Alternatively, residents should at least provide their executor’s/executors’ name(s) and contact information – and maybe also the location of their will. Contact Crystal to arrange the safekeeping of this information... or Dennis Trochim, Murdoch Management (204-982-2014) to get general information on the regulations and rules themselves.
4. For more details, refer to the actual Regulation 2.07 (beginning on page 6 of the attached Rules and Regulations document) and then file the document with your other important papers.

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. In the Board’s continued effort to do more advance planning - and better communication - of events of importance and relevance to families, here are two dates (one a reminder; the other a new one) for your calendar. We look forward to seeing you at one if not both!

- ! **Annual General Meeting - Wednesday, October 17 at 5:30pm** in Friends Housing’s Common Room. Look for this year’s meeting to be more informative - and include a guest speaker.
- ! **Christmas 2018 Friends’ Family Celebration - Thursday, December 13 at 6:30 pm** at Marantha Church (conveniently right next door to Friends Housing). As per usual, a Christmas dinner for residents, staff and Board will take place immediately prior to this “open to family members” part which will include dessert and entertainment for all.

More details will follow. Contact Crystal should you wish more information in the interim.

A Fond Farewell to Spring/Summer Students, Marie and Owen!

Things have wound up for another summer jam-packed with activities of all kinds for residents – on and off-site. . This has been accomplished with the hard work and enthusiasm of our 2

summer students – Marie, a practicum student from Robertson College who was with us for 4 weeks beginning in late May and Owen, a post-secondary student from the University of Winnipeg for the months of July and August – all under the able guidance and direction of Loveeza, Activities Coordinator and Crystal. We sincerely thank them and wish them well.

Decluttering or Downsizing?

Friends Housing's "Give and Take" area in the Common Room is always in need of new or "gently used" household items, clothing, toiletries and even non-perishable food items. For many residents, it is a great way to help stretch their dollars, contribute to the "sharing" aspect of what helps make a strong, caring community and keep useful items out of the landfill. You too can help. Even if your family member(s) living at Friends Housing may not want - or need - your no-longer-needed lamp, winter jacket or oversupply of some non-perishable food, the "Give and Take" area would be thrilled to get them! For more information, contact Loveeza (204-953-1161-ph).

Annual Apartment Inspections Are Done. Now What?

Annual apartment suite inspections were done on July 26. The purpose is to ensure all rules and procedures are being adhered to (i.e. ensure no fire or safety violations, ensure suites are kept in an appropriate condition and state of cleanliness, and identify any damages) as well as allow an opportunity for residents to express concerns.

The Board has also begun to create a much-needed plan for long-term suite maintenance and upgrading, something now able to be done given Murdoch Management is now very ably handling the day-to-day building operations. For more information, contact Dennis Trochim, Murdoch Management or John Gosselin.

Friends Housing Profile*: Eleanor Webb, Board Vice-Chair

1. How long have you been involved with Friends Housing?

I began my involvement with Friends Housing in the 1980s, as a member of the originating group – which included Helga Berger and Don Plummer – and set out to meet an unmet need. The result was Friends Housing which officially opened on November 1, 1990. Though currently I am the Vice-Chairperson of the Board, I also have served in other capacities on the Board over the years, including Treasurer.

2. Tell us a little bit about your background.

I have lived in Winnipeg all my life (except for a 9-year period a number of years ago when lived in Toronto). Having had three sons – two of them diagnosed with schizophrenia – I learned firsthand about the disease and available resources (and lack thereof) years ago – and still today. That has been a major influence in my volunteer work for many years.

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

I saw the substandard choices that people with such disabilities had when it came to places to live. That was simply unacceptable to me. My life's work has largely revolved around living a life committed to caring and looking after others - from babysitting children in my younger years to caring for aging parents, and of course supporting my sons. Getting involved in Friends Housing Board was a natural and logical extension.

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

Coming up with new ideas to make residents' lives better is very rewarding to me. I'm not afraid to ask questions and feel I can still contribute – and want to. My vision, shared by the Board, and key focus now is to get a second apartment building built – one which Friends Housing residents can “age into,” i.e. provide greater support for those who need it.

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

The financial aspect. Though the Board is very frugal, keeping up with operational costs – as well as continuing to move forward with new initiatives – is an ongoing challenge.

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

I like to think my decades long involvement – with Friends Housing as well as other related community projects (including Clubhouse and its adjacent, recently opened Fountain Springs Housing complex) provides the history as well as current knowledge of Winnipeg's community mental health resources – which I feel contribute to the Board and organization moving forward into the future.

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?

There's three things actually. Firstly, I would like families to think about how they can get more involved with their own family member(s) who live at Friends Housing – as supporting your family member in ways he or she needs helps support the staff as well as indirectly the Board too. Plus, quality family relationships are important – whether there is a mental health component or not. Secondly, I would like families to get more “connected” with other Friends Housing families – and the organization. Attending events like the AGM and Christmas event are two ways to do this. Thirdly, make Friends Housing a “charity of choice” when deciding who to donate to.

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

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