

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Thursday, Sept. 26, 2019



New shelter opens in time for winter

Our Place also expands shower hours into evening

VICTORIA, B.C. – In response to the increasing number of vulnerable people huddled on the sidewalk outside of Our Place in the evening, the non-profit is opening a new night shelter to accommodate 35 people this winter.

“For our existing shelter at First Met, we have a waiting list of over 40 people every night,” says Don Evans, CEO of Our Place. “That tells us we desperately need more shelter space.”

Our Place has been searching for locations to host a winter shelter throughout the Greater Victoria area, but with nothing coming into play, it made the decision to use its downtown drop-in centre.

“Every evening, Our Place staff will transform a small recreational space in the basement at 919 Pandora to accommodate 35 mats,” says Evans. “This will give 35 people the security of knowing they have a bed for the night, every night, over the winter period.”

With the assistance of BC Housing, the new shelter space will open on Oct. 1.

Additionally, to assist those people who are working during the day, but need a shelter bed at night, Our Place is also expanding the hours of its hygiene area into the evening. For the first time in its history, hot showers will be available from 6pm to 9pm, seven days per week.

“A hot shower is so important for both physical and mental health,” says Evans. “And we have fantastic volunteers who scrub the showers after every use so that people are entering a clean space. It is just one of the ways that we show dignity and respect for the people we serve.”

If the public would like to help with the expanded hours, Our Place is now in need of more clean towels and hygiene volunteers. Towels can be dropped off anytime at 919 Pandora Avenue, and volunteers are invited to learn more at <https://www.ourplacesociety.com/get-involved/volunteer-opportunities>

For over 50 years, Our Place has been a unique inner-city community centre serving Greater Victoria’s most vulnerable: working poor, impoverished elderly, mentally and physically challenged, addicted and the homeless. Individuals and businesses provide much of the financial support for its programs and services. Our Place provides over

1,000 meals per day, plus 1,200 snacks, hot showers, education, job skills, health care, addiction recovery services, donated clothing, counseling and outreach services; plus 45 transitional housing units and over 140 shelter spaces. Most importantly, Our Place provides a sense of hope and belonging to our neighbours in need.

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