

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Our Place opens new overnight shelter**

***Forty homeless people will have a warm, dry place to sleep this winter***

**VICTORIA, B.C.** – This winter, Our Place is opening a new overnight shelter that will provide sleeping mats for up to 40 vulnerable people.

With approximately \$148,000 in funding from the B.C. government, Our Place has opened an overnight shelter at nearby First Metropolitan United Church that will run until March 31, 2016. Doors will open each night at 7:30 p.m. with breakfast served at Our Place every morning at 7 a.m.

“Every winter it breaks our hearts when we close our doors in the evening, leaving vulnerable people with so few places to go,” says Don Evans, executive director of Our Place. “We’re thrilled the government has responded to this need, enabling us to provide overnight shelter for 40 additional people who might otherwise be left on the street.”

Along with individuals, the overnight shelter is planning to accommodate couples and people with pets, two groups that have an especially difficult time securing a dry, safe place to sleep.

“We want to remove as many barriers to shelter as we can,” adds Evans. “People don’t want to be separated from their partners or pets. They simply want to be indoors and out of the cold.”

Clarice Dillman, council co-chair of First Met United Church, agrees. “We’re excited to partner with Our Place to provide shelter for people with so few options. First Met has a successful 17-year history of providing shelter and comfort to vulnerable people in our community.”

“Each winter, we work with communities and our non-profit partners, such as Our Place, to make sure that extra shelter space is available during the cold winter months,” says Rich Coleman, Minister Responsible for Housing. “Funding for these spaces is part of the almost \$12 million we invest in the Victoria area each year to provide emergency shelter spaces, subsidized units and rent supplements for people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.”

Our Place is 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 the majority of financial support for its programs and services. Our Place provides over 1,500 meals per day, hot

showers, education, job skills, free clothing, counseling and outreach services, plus 45 transitional housing units. Most importantly, it provides a sense of hope and belonging to our neighbours in need.

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