

An information newsletter about Mental Health and Addiction Services in Waterloo and Wellington.

# The Updater

## Welcome—Spotlight on Supportive Housing

### Crisis Line Numbers

Wellington,  
Dufferin  
519-821-0140  
or toll free  
1-877-822-0140

+++++

Waterloo Region  
519-744-1813  
or toll free  
1-866-366-4566

Water colour paintings shown throughout this newsletter are from Carmen. Carmen is supported through the Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health Inc, Supportive Housing Program. She displays her artistic talents to give expression to her recovery through paintings. Thank you Carmen for sharing your talent with us.

This edition of the Updater is focused on the Supportive Housing initiatives across Waterloo-Wellington, provided by our community of addictions & mental health agencies. Housing stability is a critical piece of the puzzle for people who are working on maintaining their mental health, working through their own recovery process and needing the very basic resource of having a safe, affordable place to live. Some of the perspectives offered in this issue of the Updater are from individuals who have needed help to establish housing stability for themselves and their family. Anna's story is a perfect example of the far-reaching implications on people in our community who are in need of additional housing supports. Without a roof over one's head, tackling the other big issues in life can become insurmountable. Thank you to all of the individuals and agencies who contributed material for this important overview of the Supportive Housing in our community.

Jessie Baynham, Editor

### Correction:

*In the previous issue of the Updater, October 2008, some agencies were missed being recognized as participants of the Human Services & Justice Coordinating Committee.*

*My apologies to:*

- *Youth Justice Probation Services*
- *Family Counselling Centre of Cambridge & North Dumfries and*
- *The Working Centre (KW)*  
*Marion Evans*

“Dufferin Connects” is a recently formed partnership of Addictions & Mental Health service providers, aimed at establishing coordinated, community-built services and improving access for Dufferin residents.

For a copy of its first newsletter “Dufferin Connects—Network News” email: ED@dc-wd.org

Coming soon!  
www.dufferinconnects.ca

## Recovery Support Plan (RSP)

**The long wait is finally over.** The Crisis Communications working group (a representation of numerous organizations within the Waterloo-Wellington LHIN), and the Self Help Alliance have launched the Recovery Support Plan and Guidelines.

Information and forms can be found at [www.crisislinks.ca](http://www.crisislinks.ca).

It all started back in August 2007 with a review of the RICP, (registered individual crisis plan) when the Crisis Public Relations Working

Group met to review the current process and information. From there a networking barbecue, regional focus groups and a feedback session was held. The data was then compiled in an effort to determine the outcome of the process. Some community mental health agencies were then asked to pilot the project.

Two training sessions were held in February 2009. Training was specifically targeting three groups:

- 1) supervisors or managers of case managers and crisis

- workers;
- 2) workers identified as potential trainers in your organization and;
- 3) Self –Help Alliance staff.

Suggestions from those trainings and the pilot process were incorporated; the final copies are now available.

Future training initiatives are currently being discussed.

## Supportive Housing in Wellington-Dufferin



Green vase by Carmen

**For more information about CMHA's Supportive Housing contact:**

**Guelph office:  
519-836-6220**

**Orangeville office  
519-938-8776**

---

*"CMHA's housing service is supported by the various partnerships we have with landlords, superintendants and the Wellington Guelph Housing Authority*

---

With the distribution of the provincial Homelessness Initiative Phase II dollars, Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), Grand River Branch was given both capital dollars and rent supplement dollars. The capital dollars purchased three homes.....two in Guelph and one in Fergus providing nine supported housing spaces. The rent supplement dollars provided an additional 45 spaces giving CMHA a total of 54 supported housing units for those who experience a major mental health issue. These units are affordable and involve ongoing long-term support coordina-

tion/case coordination/case management services for each person living in one of these units as well.

CMHA's housing service is supported by the valuable partnerships we have with landlords, superintendants and the Wellington Guelph Housing Authority. Individuals living in these units are supported by 15 different workers from one of the following agencies: CMHA, Grand River Branch, Homewood Health Centre, ACTT and Trellis. These units are scattered throughout the communities of Guelph, Elora, Fergus and Orangeville.

In 2007, CMHA Grand River Branch developed a partnership with Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health, Inc. (WRHMH) increasing supported housing by an additional 24 units in the Arthur, Fergus, Mt. Forest, Guelph and Orangeville communities. Additional CMHA staff of 1.5 FTE Support Coordinators and 1.7 FTE Support Coaches were hired in order to provide more intensive support to the people living in this housing.

Submitted by:  
Lane Aspinall, Co-Team Leader  
Centre for Mental Health, Guelph &  
Orangeville

## Discovery House - CMHA, Grand River Branch

Discovery House has been an integral part of CMHA and a community resource since first opening in 1984. CMHA provides short-term, transitional housing (up to a maximum of three months) through Discovery House in two ways:

### **Step-Down Supportive Housing Services:**

This provides individuals with an opportunity for early discharge from Homewood Health Centre to plan for successful community re-entry, including the develop-

ment of an integrated support and treatment plan.

### **Transitional Housing Services:**

Transitional housing provides individuals in the community experiencing a housing crisis time and opportunity to locate alternative housing. This may also include the time and opportunity for people to develop their vision of desirable permanent housing, assess their skills and capacities, as well as assess their personal needs.

Discovery House has six beds (four step-down beds and two transitional housing beds). From April 1, 2008 to December 31, 2009 (9 months), Discovery House offered short-term transitional housing to 25 individuals for a total of 1,384 resident days.

Submitted by:  
Lane Aspinall, Co-Team Leader  
Centre for Mental Health, Guelph &  
Orangeville

## Referral and Assessment for Housing - Guelph-Wellington

Safe, affordable housing is essential in maintaining good mental health. CMHA along with our partner agencies are working to provide this basic necessity to people who are struggling with and recovering from mental health issues. In my role as referral coordinator at the *Centre for Mental Health* in Guelph I complete assessments to determine eligibility for supportive housing and manage the waitlist. For a person to be added to the waitlist they must be at least 18 years old and eligible for and willing to accept long-term mental health support. A referral for housing and/or support can be submitted by the person, their family, their worker, or someone else who is involved with them. This can be initi-

ated by a phone call or visit to the Centre, or can be mailed in to me. If the person is already receiving long-term support I will immediately add their name to the waitlist. Otherwise, I will meet with them to complete the assessment to get appropriate support in place and put the person's name on the housing waitlist.

Eligibility for housing and support is based on the "3 D's": diagnosis or diagnosable disorder, duration, and disability.

The primary *Diagnoses* that are considered for long-term support include schizophrenia, major mood disorders, paranoid and other psychosis, and personality disorders that are not the primary con-

cern. A person may have more than one diagnosis. A diagnosable disorder refers to a person who is experiencing significant symptoms of a mental health issue but has not as yet received a formal diagnosis from a psychiatrist.

*Duration* refers to the length of time that the person has been experiencing difficulty due to mental health issues. Difficulties of a persistent and long-standing nature may indicate severe or chronic mental health issues.

*Disability* describes the impact that the mental health issue has on the person's ability to cope and function on a daily basis, at home and in the community.

Submitted by:  
Susan Thompson  
Referral Coordinator  
Canadian Mental Health Association

---

**Contact:**  
**Centre Referral**  
**Coordinator:**  
**Guelph office:**  
**519-836-6220**

---

## "The Rental Unit Roundabout": Managing the Waitlist

Of course, the need for affordable housing is great. The number of referrals that I have on file and continue to receive each month exceeds the number of units available. There are currently 84 names on the waitlist. Names are placed on the waitlist based on the desired location, and prioritized by the date that I receive the referral. When a unit becomes available I will call the next person on the list to arrange for the person to view of the unit. If the person decides to rent the unit

arrangements will be made for lease signing. If the person declines the unit their name will remain on the waitlist and I will continue to show the unit until it is rented. I love this part of my job. I know that when I have rented a unit to someone, they are happy and excited about their future.

Submitted by:  
Susan Thompson  
Referral Coordinator  
Canadian Mental Health Association  
Grand River Branch



Sunset on Columbia Lake,  
by Carmen

## Agency Overview Dunara

Submitted by:  
Candice Wrixon,  
Residential Counselor, Dunara



Twin Maples, by Carmen

**For more  
information on  
Dunara contact:**

**519-836-2332**

Dunara is a non-profit organization located near downtown Guelph. We started as a psychosocial rehabilitation group home that serviced eight adults with severe mental health issues. We provide a home for people with 24 hour, 7 days a week staffing. Dunara started with four full time counselors, Program Director, Life Skills Coordinator, relief staff and a part-time secretary.

Since 1987, we have grown to seven residential beds and two crisis/respite beds. We also have two un-staffed transitional homes - Trinity and Dublin House- that provide housing for eight individuals in the community. We also have two fulltime Outreach

workers that provide interim support while people wait for long term services.

Dunara now has a Supportive Housing Program with two fulltime workers, in partnership with Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health Inc. We provide support to 16 individuals in their own subsidized apartments all over Guelph. We also provide Case Management to eight other individuals in Guelph who are in non-subsidized units but still want support.

Dunara also offers a weekly music and support group that is open to the community and we will be starting an art group in the spring led by a couple of people we support.

Dunara hosts "Spring Fling", an annual fundraiser which includes a night of dining, dancing, Silent Auction and this year, the "Stand Up For Mental Health Comedy Team." The Spring Fling raises funds to support our annual camping excursion, known as Camp Extraordunara! Over the last several years, our campers have grown from seven Dunara residents to 62 individuals from Kitchener-Waterloo, Wellington and Dufferin Counties. In collaboration with other agencies, all individuals are welcome to attend.

Dunara has grown rapidly over the past couple of years and hopefully will continue to grow in the years to come.

## A Conversation with Robert

---

### Recovery Is:

*Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time.*

**Thomas Edison**

---

Robert, a tenant in a 'subsidized' apartment in Kitchener with Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health, discusses his experience with his Support Coordinator, Simon Farlow.

**Simon:** Tell us about your past housing experience.

**Robert:** Before moving to WRHMH housing in December 2007, I lived in an apartment where nothing ever got fixed. I was collecting E.I. at the time and the \$700/month rent left me with little money to live on. I struggle with depression and my precarious financial situation combined with the loss of my job, increased these feelings. I have always had thoughts of suicide, even as a young man

and have have attempted a few times.

**Simon:** How did you first connect with WRHMH?

**Robert:** I was referred to WRHMH by Crisis Services and was connected to a Short Term Support worker. He helped me to obtain supportive housing, apply for income support and make plans to deal with various issues. I have some difficulties with literacy, and I could not have accomplished these tasks without this support.

**Simon:** Tell us about your current apartment and supports.

**Robert:** I currently live in a small one bedroom apartment

located in downtown Kitchener and pay a subsidized rent geared to income. I now receive a Long Term Disability pension from my former employment as well as CPP-Disability. Although there are still lots of problems in my life, this stability in housing gives me one less thing to worry about. I meet with Simon and also with a counselor. Simon has helped with applications for various services (ODSP, CPP-D, Trillium Drug Plan), and given me support around ongoing feelings of depression and practical matters. My support coordinators have both been nice guys who have treated me well. They have been very helpful in lots of ways.

# Agency Overview

## Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health Inc.

Submitted by:  
 Anne Wright-Gedcke  
 Community Intake Co-ordinator  
 Waterloo Regional Homes for  
 Mental Health Inc.

Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health, Inc. (WRHMH) is a private, non-profit organization which provides a range of housing and support services for individuals experiencing and/or recovering from serious mental health issues. Established in 1980 with one, eight-bedroom group home, the organization now provides service to more than 1,000 people annually through a range of housing options, longer term (housing support, case management, (ACTT) and shorter term support services (case management and outreach). Newly developed services include an (ACTT) Assertive Community Treatment Team, a Crisis/Respite Residential Service, and an expansion of supportive housing services.

Waterloo Regional Homes employs 95 staff. Support services are also provided through agreements with Waterloo Region Assertive Community Treatment Team – St. Joseph’s Health Care, London (WRACCT), Canadian Mental Health Association, Grand River Branch (CMHA-GRB), and Dunara (Wellington Dufferin Homes for Psychiatric Rehabilitation

Supportive housing is the foundation of Waterloo Regional Homes and the organization has had twenty-eight years to build on this foundation, in both scope and depth of services offered. While most housing is located in

Waterloo Region, particularly Kitchener and Cambridge, partnership opportunities with Dunara and CMHA Grand River Branch have provided opportunities to locate units in the County of Wellington.

Currently, WRHMH provides a total of 318 subsidized accommodations, as follows:

**67 agency-owned spaces in 10 properties**

- 3 group homes (22)
- 1 duplex (8)
- 4 bungalows (12)
- 2 apartment buildings (25)

**251 subsidized one-bedroom apartments**

- 192 dedicated units subsidized by the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- 22 dedicated units subsidized by contract through the Region of Waterloo/Ministry of Health and Long Term Care
- 33 non-dedicated subsidized units through Waterloo Region Housing.

WRHMH contracts with 32 private and non-profit sector housing providers for subsidized apartments. Tenant placement, property management, maintenance and landlord-tenant issues are managed internally through the

organization’s intake and property management department.

All 318 individuals housed by WRHMH receive a range of ongoing support services from 24/7 to monthly contact. This is provided through six in-house teams, the organization’s ACT Team, WRACCT, CMHA-GRB and Dunara. These teams also support people living in the community in a variety of situations which includes boarding homes, rooming houses, retirement homes, family homes, privately rented units, shelters and homeless individuals. In other words, long term services are provided wherever people live.

Supports include: recovery planning, support coordination, supportive counseling, life skills support, housing access, education, advocacy, crisis support, and links to treatment services. Individuals serviced by the area Assertive Community Treatment Teams receive a full range of treatment, rehabilitation and support services.

After-hours crisis services are available to all people supported by WRHMH through an in-house pager system and/or agreements with the CMHA Mobile Crisis Service for Waterloo Region.

### Coordinated Housing Access Site

WRHMH is one of five Coordinated Access Sites for Waterloo Region-wide subsidized housing.

Individuals, 16 years of age or older with mental health issues who are interested in applying for housing should contact:

Anne Wright-Gedcke  
 Community Intake Co-ordinator  
 Waterloo Regional Homes for  
 Mental Health Inc.  
 618 King St. W.  
 Kitchener, Ontario N2G 1C8  
 (519) 742-3191 ext. 227

## Brief History of Supportive Housing in Ontario

Submitted by:  
Wendy Czarny  
Executive Director  
Waterloo Regional Homes for  
Mental Health Inc.

With the advent of de-institutionalization in Ontario which began in the 1960's, the main approach to housing people in the community was in boarding and lodging homes run by private operators and subsidized by provincial and municipal governments. Known as "custodial housing," these homes primarily focused on providing food and shelter and varied in their ability to provide rehabilitation support.

Emphasis shifted in the late 1970's as community mental health agencies emerged emphasizing the need for more rehabilitative support. Such organizations began to develop supportive housing primarily through group homes with staff support to teach life skills, linking peo-

ple to resources in order to facilitate increased community engagement and, improve independent living.,

The 1990's saw another shift in emphasis in housing need, with the concept of "supported housing." While primarily rooted in the notion of establishing integrated housing through dedicated apartment units within a larger community apartment complex, the concept intended to provide individuals with more housing options, flexible supports, privacy, and "normalized" living environments. While affordability was a major barrier to implementing this model, the provincial government supported this approach through housing funding initiatives starting in 1998.

Today, Ontario's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care considers "supported housing" within this portfolio of supportive housing are two approaches are more similar than different.

Today, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care / Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network funds 8,400 mental health supportive housing units in the Province of Ontario, representing approximately 1/3 of the community mental health budget. There are an additional 630 mental health supportive units funded through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and administered through local counties or municipalities in partnership with mental health providers.

## Mental Health First Aid



**What is Mental Health First Aid?** This workshop teaches participants how to help someone who is showing signs of a mental health problem or is experiencing a mental health crisis.

The 12-hour training course covers the following topics:

- Signs and symptoms of mental health problems and crisis situations.
- A basic model to provide Mental Health First Aid.
- Information about how to help in a crisis and how to help prevent a crisis from arising.
- Encouraging a person to identify options for help.

### Who Should Attend?

Members of the general public, teachers, health service providers, emergency workers, human resources professionals, employers, community groups. Anyone can benefit from learning Mental Health First Aid.

**When?** Tuesday, May 5th and Wednesday, May 6th , 9:00 am—4:30 pm, Waterloo, ON

**Cost?** Introductory price of \$95.00 per participant in honour of National Mental Health Week.

**Register** at [workshops@cmhagrb.on.ca](mailto:workshops@cmhagrb.on.ca) Or call 519-766-4450 x269 /1-888-448-1603 x269. Registration is required.

# Waterloo Region

## The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy

Submitted by:  
Angela Pye  
Social Planning, Policy &  
Program Administration  
Region of Waterloo

Everyone has a role to play in ending homelessness and promoting housing stability in Waterloo Region – all orders of government, non-profit groups, the private sector and community members. In November 2007, *All Roads Lead to Home: A Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy for Waterloo Region* (the Strategy) was released following a two-year period of intensive community engagement. The project was led by the Region of Waterloo and guided by several committees consisting of service providers from across the region, community members and Regional staff working in the area of housing stability.

The Strategy is intended to be used by everyone-housing stability service providers, people with lived homelessness experience, the Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group with its member groups and all orders of government in their collective efforts to increase the housing stability of community members.

This article reviews the development of the Strategy and how the community is moving forward with implementation key findings.

### How was the Strategy developed?

The Strategy is a stand-alone report that synthesizes findings from several sources

of information including an inventory of programs in Waterloo Region related to housing stability plus nine background reports, each focusing on a specific area of the system, issue or population. All of the background reports involved extensive community participation and where possible, input from people with lived homelessness experience. The background reports incorporate literature reviews, capacity assessments, trend analyses, findings from focus groups and interviews, and community feedback from stakeholders across the region. The findings were used to generate 92 actions to strengthen the housing stability system in Waterloo Region.

### How is the Strategy being implemented?

The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy Monitoring Committee (SMC) was formed in 2008 to monitor implementation of the Strategy through to December 2010. Members of the SMC include representatives from organizations that have agreed to lead or co-lead actions in the Strategy, government representatives and local researchers in the area of housing stability. The SMC provides progress reports to Regional Council in November of each year and makes recommendations for moving forward.

To support this shift, the Strategy identified five key principles.

### Principles to Guide Actions:

1. Plan to end homelessness through a focus on building and maintaining *housing stability*.
2. While there is a need for emergency shelter services, use resources to *strengthen existing services*, rather than investing in new emergency shelters.
3. Adopt a “*Housing First*” approach for adults experiencing homelessness: consider housing as the top priority rather than services to address any pre-existing issues.
4. Build greater capacity in *longer term housing stability programs* (e.g., permanent housing and support) to meet current and projected future demand.
5. Tailor approaches to degrees of homelessness; focus initial efforts on ending *persistent homelessness*.

The Strategy highlighted that a large number of people experiencing homelessness have mental health and/or substance use issues. As such, nine of its actions aim to strengthen the housing stability system for people with these disabilities.

---

*The housing stability system includes programs with a primary mandate to provide resources to help people find and/or maintain housing. Some programs meet immediate needs (e.g., emergency shelter), while others serve people for shorter (e.g., Rent Bank, transitional housing) or longer periods of time (e.g., housing with on-site support).*

---

## Waterloo Region The Homelessness to Housing Stability Strategy *Continued*

The local definition of **housing stability** includes three components:

**Housing** that is accessible, safe, adequately maintained, of suitable size, affordable, provides security of tenure and is accepted by the individual.

Enough **income** to sustain the minimum standards for: rent, utilities, food, health, clothing, education, transportation and recreation.

The opportunity to access additional **support**, as needed, to help people live as independently as desired and connect to others in meaningful ways.

### Four actions seek to increase local capacity key areas, including:

- pre and post substance use treatment shelter/housing options;
- housing with support for people with mental health issues;
- housing with support for people with substance use issues; and
- housing with support for people with conditions best served through a “non-specific” model (e.g., dual diagnoses, concurrent disorders and other complex issues requiring low demand affordable housing and highly specialized support).

### Five actions call for an assessment and, where needed, enhancement of the system’s ability to:

- utilize multidisciplinary teams;
- support people at various stages in the recovery and relapse continuum;
- incorporate peers who have used, or are currently using substances;
- coordinate service provision for people with concurrent disorders and dual diagnosis and adopt integrated approaches (e.g., providing access to dual recovery/self-help programs in addition to treatment); and
- promote a harm reduction approach to service delivery.

Local leadership has been identified for all of these

actions.

### Why was persistent homelessness identified as a top priority?

People experiencing persistent homelessness often have complex issues that make it difficult to find and maintain housing over the long term without specialized support. These complex issues frequently include mental health and substance use issues.

Six actions in the Strategy seek to address persistent homelessness and two targets have been endorsed by Regional Council in this area: 1) to prevent persistent homelessness for 100 people and 2) to end persistent homelessness for 50 people by December 2010.

Through the Federal Government’s Homelessness Partnering Strategy funding (HPS), several pilots were initiated in 2008 by the Region in partnership with community agencies to implement several of the persistent homelessness actions, including: **Shelters to Housing Stability** offered through the Cambridge Shelter, Charles Street Men’s Hostel and YWCA-Mary’s Place

**Streets to Housing Stability** currently offered by the Working Centre and K-W YWCA, to be expanded into Cambridge in 2010.

**Street Outreach** offered through the Working Centre

“**Whatever It Takes**” – **Service Resolution** offered through Lutherwood in partnership with Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health, Trellis Mental Health and Developmental Services and the Region of Waterloo.

These pilots are being evaluated as a group with the support of the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR). A second interim report on the outcomes and effectiveness of these pilot projects is expected in May 2009.

The Federal Government has recently extended HPS funding at current levels to March 31, 2011, which means that all of the pilots will continue for two more years.

### Questions?

Copies of the Strategy and additional information about the project can be accessed by visiting

[www.region.waterloo.on.ca](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca) (follow the path: *Social Services → Social Planning Homelessness → Housing Stability Strategy*).

Questions can be directed to:

**Angela Pye**  
[pangela@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:pangela@region.waterloo.on.ca)

**519-575-4757 x 5510.**

## Substance Use Issues & Housing Stability

Submitted by:  
Wendy Czarny  
Executive Director  
Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental  
Health Inc.

In 2008, the provincial government made a commitment to fund 1,000 supportive and transitional housing units over the next four years for people with problematic substance use issues in Ontario.

This announcement is part of the government's commitment to "continue to strengthen mental health and addictions services with increased funding and strong policy direction."

### The objectives of this initiative are to:

- Increase housing stability for people with problematic substance use

and with concurrent disorders.

- Reduce the frequency of re-admissions to addiction programs, particularly Withdrawal Management Services.
- Reduce pressure on the emergency care and acute care systems.

The program framework principles include the adoption of a client-centered recovery and harm reduction approach, utilizing the "Housing First" model which is integrated into the community. Support services will be provided through a collaborative, integrated,

multi-disciplinary team approach.

Funding for this program will include both housing subsidy and support services, although the nature of support services will require intensive collaboration and formal linkages with other service providers in the community.

Forty-eight supportive housing units have been allocated to the Waterloo Wellington Local Health Integration Network (WWLHIN) area with sixteen units established in each of the last three years of the program initiative.

## The Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group

Submitted by:  
Wendy Czarny  
Executive Director  
Waterloo Regional Homes  
for Mental Health Inc.

The Waterloo Region Homelessness and Housing Umbrella Group (HHUG) is a non-partisan group of concerned individuals, agencies and groups committed to preventing and reducing homelessness in Waterloo Region.

HHUG initiatives include:

1. Publishing an annual Housing Stability Report Card for Waterloo Region;

2. Establishing the Housing Stability Training Centre to provide training for service providers, landlords and volunteers within the housing stability sector;

3. Providing various forums for members to learn about homelessness and housing activities in the community, and to connect and coordinate around activities.

Further information can be found on the HHUG website at [www.hhug.ca](http://www.hhug.ca)

### *My thoughts on subsidized housing:*

*My family and I have definitely been helped with subsidized housing. It has allowed us to focus on strengthening both our family and health (both physical health and mental health) without having to worry about being able to come up with impossible rent money!*

*Suzanne*

## Anna's Story - A Housing Stability Success

I have lived in supported housing for almost a year. It is different from where I have lived before, but different for a good reason. I live here with my young daughter.

Five years ago I lived in 'normal' housing. I was diagnosed with depression. I was unable to get off the couch. I was sleeping all the time. I stopped caring about my home or paying any of my bills. After about six months of this, I received an eviction notice and slowly all our basic needs were being cut off - hydro, gas, and phone. A few days later I was hospitalized.

After the hospital I went to a homeless shelter. At this point Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health came into my life for the first time. My support worker was able to help me find a 2 bedroom apartment for myself and my little girl. This apartment was lovely outwardly but living there was quite difficult. It turned out that the 'quiet' upstairs neighbours held very loud parties, frequently. I was paying almost 90% of my Ontario Works income to rent and hydro. Under this stress I was falling more and more into depression and funny enough, I had a hard time leaving my home without panicking. My little girl missed 53 days each year in her kindergarten years. I had a hard time staying awake, a hard time cleaning my home, a hard time doing things that had been totally

normal for me.

After two years of this I could not bear it any longer. I contacted Lutherwood to see if they could help me find affordable housing, and was again connected to Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health. I met with a fantastic support worker. We talked about what the issues were and what I needed. I applied for supportive housing. Soon after, a friend offered to share her home with us. Feeling that this was our best option I decided to take her up on the offer. Our girls got along well and I wouldn't feel so lonely and most of all we would be safe.

Within days of moving in things started to feel wrong. A few months later I noticed that the things I was paying rent for were not getting paid. Phone was cut off and then the cable and then the collection notices began arriving. I remember many meetings with my support worker where we just sat in her car with a cup of coffee as I sobbed about the terrible mistake I had made.

One meeting Val asked me if I would consider moving to Cambridge. I was offered a two bedroom subsidized apartment through Waterloo Regional Homes. I went to look at the apartment and loved it immediately. The building was so nice.

My daughter and I really like living here. I get the support I

need. I see a support worker once a week. Life has settled into a nice routine. We adopted a wonderful dog named Goldie.

I don't know where we would be without supportive housing. Coping for me is a really hard thing to do. In the winter it seems to be worse and I feel everyday a little bit more of my happiness slip away. But having someone who is there regularly to make sure everything is ok is very helpful. I am able to have some things in place so that we will not be homeless again. My worker and I have also put into place a plan in case I am hospitalized again, taking away the stress of what would happen and where my daughter would go. I have also been able to take charge of who should know what. Talking and planning prepares me for any eventuality in the future. It also helps me to feel safe and in charge of what is happening to me.

Living here I take part in monthly get-togethers, I take part in tenant meetings and I have gone to recovery meetings. I actually went to the Christmas party-- something I probably wouldn't have done before.

My daughter likes living here too. She has made friends with another girl in the building. In the summer she helped in the community garden behind our building. She actually ate some of the vegetables that she helped grow. We are part of a

community here. Her school is so close that she goes every day. Having the dog helps also. I have to leave the house to walk her. The dog has become a loved member of the building too- she had surgery for cancer in the fall and everyone was quite worried for her. Living in supported housing is nice because I have my own apartment and we are really safe here.

---

*“Understanding is the first step to acceptance, and only with acceptance can there be recovery.”*

**Joanne Kathleen Rowling**

---

---

*“Determination, patience and courage are the only things needed to improve any situation”*

**Peter Sinclair**

---

## Crisis Workers Society of Ontario Annual Conference 25 Years of Networking and Support

This is an exciting year for the Board of Directors of the Crisis Society of Ontario. On June 11-12, 2009 at the Glen House Resort Gananoque, Ontario they are celebrating their 25th year as a volunteer organization dedicated to enhancement, education and support of the Crisis Services throughout Ontario. For years they have been promoting their annual conference which provides Crisis Work-

ers throughout the province with an opportunity to network and educate themselves on the latest developments in the field of crisis work. Realizing that participants work with different populations either professionally or on a volunteer basis within the province, they have included workshops on children, adolescents, adults and older adults in this year's agenda.

Conference details can be found at:

[www.cwsontario.org](http://www.cwsontario.org)

Glen House Resort information can be found at:

[www.glenhouseressort.com](http://www.glenhouseressort.com)



## SAVE THE DATE 2010 Crisis Workers Society of Ontario Annual Conference

The 2010 conference is coming to our community in 2010, being hosted by the Waterloo-Wellington Regional Crisis Committee.

**Save the date:**

June 9,10, 11, 2010 at the Delta Guelph, Ontario

**Theme: Crisis**

**Partnerships: Recovery Together**

Do you have an workshop topic or idea?

Contact Karen Guse at [kguse@trellis.on.ca](mailto:kguse@trellis.on.ca)

Are you interested in volunteering on one of the 5 planning committees?  
contact [kguse@trellis.on.ca](mailto:kguse@trellis.on.ca)

Are you interested in volunteering during the conference event?  
contact Carmen Abel at [abelc@cmhagrb.on.ca](mailto:abelc@cmhagrb.on.ca)

Conference details can be found at:

[www.cwsontario.org](http://www.cwsontario.org)

Glen House Resort information can be found at:

[www.glenhouseressort.com](http://www.glenhouseressort.com)

### **New Initiatives on the Horizon**

Sunnyside Seniors Support Housing  
In September 2007 the Waterloo-Wellington LHIN confirmed operational funding under the Aging at Home Strategy, to the Regional Municipality of Waterloo for the 30 unit Sunnyside Seniors Supportive Housing Program. Thirteen of these units will be dedicated to individuals with identified mental health needs.

Heartwood Place

Heartwood Place plans to develop the former Cambridge Reporter site in downtown Galt to create a new, seven storey building with 66 affordable apartment units. An existing relationship with Waterloo Regional Homes for Mental Health will be extended to provide apartments for people with mental health issues.

Supportive Housing of Waterloo

Supportive Housing of Waterloo (SHOW) plans to build a 30-unit apartment complex in Waterloo, with affordable rent and on-site support services.

Anne Wright-Gedcke  
Waterloo Regional Homes for  
Mental Health Inc.

## Update on National Research Demonstration Projects in Mental Health and Homelessness

Submitted by:  
Marie Morrison  
Social Planning, Policy &  
Program Administration

In May 2006, the Standing Senate Committee on Mental Health released the report “*Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addiction Services in Canada*”. In the fall of 2007, as an outcome of this report, the Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) was established with a head office in Calgary. MHCC has undertaken five major initiatives (and 24+ action projects). These initiatives include: 1) development of a national strategy, 2) anti-stigma interventions, 3) knowledge exchange centre, 4) research demonstration project on mental health and homelessness, and 5) development of a national volunteer movement.

In February 2008, the Federal government announced \$110 million to the Mental Health Commission of Canada to undertake five research demonstration projects in mental health and homelessness. A request for applications was issued September 5, 2008 with a submission deadline of January 31, 2008. The applications were reviewed and awarded February 2009 with a plan to begin the demonstration projects April 1, 2009.

Over the next four years, projects will take place in Moncton, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. The project is structured with MHCC serving as the project lead; a national working group (which includes a consumer advisory committee, national research team, representatives from projects in each of the five sites, and representatives from the MHCC Advisory Boards); as well as a site coordinator and advisory committees at each of the five city sites. Of note is that Geoff Nelson, professor in Community Psychology at Wilfrid Laurier, is a member of the national research team.

The projects are utilizing a Housing First model, combining permanent housing in scattered site apartments, with consumer choice and assertive community treatment (ACT). The programs are intended to serve people experiencing long-term homelessness with concurrent disorders, building on recent Canadian efforts such as Streets to Homes in Toronto and the Pathways program in Calgary. The research design includes randomizing participants into experimental and “care as usual conditions” for both high and medium level needs and to identify care and cost effectiveness of a complex community intervention. Each site will have common elements but also a unique focus (e.g., in Toronto the focus is on new immigrants, in Moncton it includes rural issues, etc.)

Some supplemental funding is available for an additional 7-8 research projects (up to \$500,000 each for three years – no program funding included). One call for proposals has already been issued and has closed. Two subsequent calls are expected over the next year. This funding has been made available by both the MHCC (\$1 million) and the Canadian Institute of Health Research (\$4 million).

Article submissions can be forwarded to Karen Guse at [kguse@trellis.on.ca](mailto:kguse@trellis.on.ca). A call for article submission outlining the theme as determined by the PAC Facilitation group will be sent 2-3 weeks prior to the email distribution target date. Suitable material such as articles of interest, new issues, important notices, changes in service, current research initiatives, coming events/conferences, etc, will be identified and submitted to the editor(s) for inclusion. The editor(s) will edit for spelling, grammar and format but will not be ultimately responsible for content errors and will not significantly alter submissions unless otherwise notified.

Updater Newsletter Contact Info:

Editorial support for this issue was provided by Jessie Baynham, Executive Director,  
Community Torchlight Inc.  
o/a Distress Centre Wellington/Dufferin  
519-821-3761 x210 (fax) 519-821-8190  
ED@dc-wd.org ~ [www.dc-wd.org](http://www.dc-wd.org)

Karen Guse

(Administrative Support, email distribution contact)

Regional Support Worker, Waterloo- Wellington Regional Crisis System  
Email: [kguse@trellis.on.ca](mailto:kguse@trellis.on.ca) Phone: 519-821-8089, ext 236, or 519-576-2333 ext. 236  
Fax: 519-576-8980