



MEDIA RELEASE

Coldest Nights of Winter Season Have Arrived

Downtown Mission to help homeless people keep warm and safe

February 4, 2022

For Immediate Release

WINDSOR ON- Windsor and Essex County will be experiencing its coldest days and nights since the winter season began in December.

This cold weather will create additional hardship for homeless people and people living in poverty, by putting them at risk of illness, frostbite or even death because of exposure to the cold. The Downtown Mission opened an overnight Warming Centre on Wednesday, February 2nd with additional funding support from The City of Windsor, through the provincial Social Services Relief Fund. This additional overnight space will assist with capacity pressures in the emergency shelter system and includes security. The Mission's Warming Centre plan has been approved by the Windsor Essex County Health Unit and is in full compliance with the Province of Ontario's Reopening of Ontario Act. This additional space overnight will be available while Shelters are full.

The system has been planning for the onset of cold weather and providing comfort stations for people experiencing homelessness since the fall. This initiative was actioned in response to pressures in the system due to COVID requirements and the cold weather. The Health Unit was also consulted to ensure all public health protocols associated with COVID were met.

"With the extreme conditions in the weather forecast we expect many more will be seeking a place to get out of the cold, even if just to get out of the elements for a few hours. We have created this additional space for people to get warm and have at least a brief respite from the elements. No one needs to risk being on the streets during this time," said Rukshini Ponniah-Goulin, Interim Executive Director. **The Downtown Mission's overnight Warming Centre is located at 875 Ouellette Ave and is open from 8 pm – 8 am each night and is available for anyone seeing shelter. During the day, shelter and food is available at 664 Victoria Ave between 8 am and 8 pm for individuals experiencing homelessness.**

For more information contact Rukshini Ponniah- Goulin, Interim Executive Director at 519-981-7382 (cell).

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*The Downtown Mission exists as a Place of Sanctuary. In response to the mandate of the Gospel, through outreach we provide: **food** for the body, **nurture** for the spirit, **shelter** for the homeless, **advocacy** for the impoverished and **opportunity** for human growth.*