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## **MEDIA RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**March 18, 2022**

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### **Additional Funds Announced for Rise in Homelessness**

BROCKVILLE - A 15-bed shelter and programming for youth at risk of being homeless will receive additional support from a new provincial funding program.

The Honourable Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing and MPP for Leeds-Grenville-Thousand Islands and Rideau Lakes, announced today another \$177,000 to total \$1.592-million to the Leeds Grenville Community and Social Services Division to battle homelessness and home insecurity.

Minister Clark made the announcement at the Cooperative Care Centre, formerly known as the Warming Centre. The centre provides temporary overnight respite, nourishment and safety for area people experiencing homelessness. It is located at the corner of County Road 2 and Oxford Avenue in Elizabethtown-Kitley Township.

"With Ontario's new Homelessness Prevention Program (HPP), we are simplifying the delivery of services and increasing funding, including here in Leeds-Grenville, so our service providers can spend more time focusing on providing vulnerable Ontarians with the supports they need to stay in their homes or get the housing they need," Minister Clark said. He was joined by local elected officials and program providers.

"Our government inherited a homelessness prevention system administered through several different government programs that was underfunded, fragmented and overly complex," he said, adding the Homeless Prevention Program combines three programs into one, including the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI).

"This will allow greater flexibility for the region to target funds where they are needed most," said Leeds Grenville Warden Roger Haley.

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The Cooperative Care Centre will receive \$500,000 for 2022/23. Connect Youth Inc., a service provider offering support to at-risk youth aged 12-25 and housing options for those aged 16-25, is receiving \$310,000.

"It's all about getting people from homeless to home," said Canon Michael Read, of St. Lawrence Anglican Church and Chair of the Brockville Housing Partnership which spearheaded the centre. There are already expansion plans.

"We're making a difference getting people off the street every night," said Shane Melcher, director of the Centre. Canon Read and Mr. Melcher said they average 360 visits per month since opening in late 2020. People from throughout Leeds Grenville and the greater Eastern Ontario region has sought shelter there. Some come to warm up and have a meal and then go while others remain for the night.

Connect Youth Inc. Interim Director Robyn Holmes said their group operates four short-term apartments in Leeds Grenville and intensive case management for at-risk youth. They have also formed a partnership with the John Howard Society to create a mixed-model facility of offices and short-term residential units on the Brockville Shopping Centre property to address increased need.

"Having received 113 referrals for youth experiencing homelessness in our last fiscal year, our agency recognizes the need for local investments to increase service provisions for those experiencing homelessness," Ms. Holmes said.

In addition to these two programs, funding through the new Homeless Prevention Program has also been provided to the John Howard Society - \$77,846; Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville - \$45,000; and Victim Services of Leeds and Grenville - \$76,610.

Over the past two years since the pandemic began, the United Counties have received \$5.7-million in Social Services Relief Funding from the Ontario government.

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