

Womens', mens' homeless shelters now available in Little Current, Manitowaning

By **Lori Thompson, Local Journalism Initiative Reporter** - June 17, 2020

MANITOULIN – Temporary homeless shelters have been set up on Manitoulin Island by Manitoulin Sudbury District Services Board (DSB) in partnership with Manitoulin Family Resources (MFR), using funding received through the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF).

A shelter for homeless women is located in Little Current while the men's temporary shelter is located in Manitowaning. There are persons in need on Manitoulin Island, said Donna Stewart, director of integrated services with DSB. "We put a notice out about temporary accommodations during this pandemic and there was some uptake."

(The shelters can be accessed through MFR, either by professional or self referral. For more information or to apply, call MFR at 705-368-3400.)

The \$200 million SSRF was created by the Province of Ontario in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, to directly support individuals and families in crisis who cannot access federal COVID-19 assistance, she explained.

It is distributed through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing's Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative (CHPI) which was originally implemented in 2013.

The DSB was allocated \$938,400 under the initiative.

"The SSRF can be used for a broad range of social services to support vulnerable people while promoting social distancing and self-isolation," Ms. Stewart said.

"In the homeless service system, funding provided under the SSRF would follow CHPI guidelines and could be used towards initiatives that could include building homeless shelter capacity (but not including capital expenditures), use of motels or hotels,



housing allowances, transportation costs, food and supplies, enhanced cleaning services, non-medical staffing requirements such as enhanced outreach services, and protective equipment," she said.

Funding may also be used in community housing and supportive housing to assist with housing costs for in-situ tenants, protective equipment and the provision of food and supplies for households in quarantine and/or isolation.

To date, the DSB has committed to spending \$531,189 with \$146,840 for emergency shelter solutions which include shelters and motel/hotel stays; \$336,349 for service and supports (food securities, cleaning, PPE, transportation); and \$48,000 for homelessness prevention, though rent banks, emergency financial assistance and utility banks, said Ms. Stewart.

The DSB has organized food supply to be delivered from Sudbury Food Bank to MFR's food bank to ensure adequate food supply for those in need. "MFR was already doing this and we just assisted with the initiative," said Ms. Stewart. The food banks are also being provided with funding for transportation and accommodations if they require help with the homeless population.

Ms. Stewart noted that the DSB has assisted First Nations individuals who have leased land and could not return home due to the First Nations Emergency Order restrictions, and has partnered with various agencies including Noojmowin Teg Health Centre and CMHA to help ensure that the First Nations population as well as DSB tenants are provided adequate food supply.

"We have two transitional community support workers who are contacting all DSB tenants to ensure that if they need any supports, that those supports are available to them," she added. "Part of this initiative was to create food baskets and to deliver one to each tenant unit to ensure everyone is cared for during this time."

She added, "We have a great working relationship with our partner organizations like MFR. Marnie (Hall, executive director) is great to work with. Without partnerships such as these, this wouldn't be possible."

