



November 7, 2023

Friends,

We didn't want to have to make a big deal about this. We hoped we would be able to quietly rent a suitable home for our women's recovery home. But we're not having any luck, so we're reaching out to the community.

### **About Our Homes**

For more than 15 years, our Addiction Services have offered recovery home living, with our men's home opening in 2008 and our women's home opening in 2015.

The premise of our homes is simple: for someone experiencing homelessness or unsafe housing, recovering from addiction is extremely difficult. Imagine someone spending weeks to months at a treatment facility, only to return to an emergency shelter where they're exposed to the same temptations and pressures they had when they were using substances. It doesn't make sense. We need to provide a better environment to support recovery. That's where our homes come in.

Our recovery homes (9 beds for men, 6 for women) provide a safe and supportive environment for people to continue their recovery journey, with the supports to help them be successful in rebuilding their lives. We believe the opposite of addiction is connection, and our program supports people to build a strong and supportive network to carry them into the next steps in their recovery journey.

Unfortunately, spaces in our homes are limited, and we are now carrying an unprecedented 1-2 year waiting list. That's where you come in.

### **Why We Need a New Home**

Ancora House, our women's recovery home, is simply too small. Not only could we be doing more – supporting more women – if we had a larger home, the quality of life for our residents would improve. Currently the women in Ancora House have very little common space, which means gathering, getting some time alone, having a confidential onsite counselling session, or having a quiet space to do homework, is rarely possible in our current setup. We need a larger space to serve more community members, and make sure those residents have the best environment we can provide.



The fact is that the day we're able to find a new home, we will be able to immediately change the lives of several women from right here in this community. On that day we'll be able to welcome 3 to 4 women into our safe, supportive, and community-based recovery home, taking them out of a shelter or other unsafe housing environment - including those living unsheltered.

And with the results our homes achieve, we know the positive impact we can have with these new residents. Over the past two years, only 18% of our residents left to return to shelter, with 82% moving on into permanent housing. They learned the tools to live a life of recovery in the community, while also knowing that if a relapse happens, we will be here to help them, free of judgement.

And the lives these folks live after moving on from our homes! Our residents get involved in and volunteer in their community. Many go back to school to get a diploma, degree, and even PhD! And so many of our former residents have entered a helping profession, bringing their invaluable life experiences to serve others. Some are even all-star members of the Porchlight staff team today.

But people don't get a shot at living those kinds of lives without strong community support.

We don't do this work in isolation. We work with many partners, such as the House of Friendship for treatment programs and community support, and with Langs, who provide primary care to our residents through their amazing IPC team. We have businesses such as LiteThrive who create opportunities for our residents, and we have the support of faith communities, such as Wanner Mennonite Church.

About two years ago, we lost the lease on our men's home, and the good people at Wanner Mennonite offered us their church manse as a rental home. It has turned into a beautiful partnership where our residents volunteer for events, church members host fun games nights and dinners, and the men have the space to dig a garden and grow their own food. It's become a beautiful and supportive environment for people to recover.

We want to do the same for the women in Ancora House

### **What We Need**

We are looking to rent a large home in Cambridge. This home would have:

- 4-5 bedrooms and 2+ bathrooms



- Large common spaces, ideally with space where we could set up a small office/counselling space
- Outdoor space
- A home ideally located in the north end of Cambridge for proximity to our men's home (but we are flexible!)

### **What We Offer**

- We will gladly pay market rent if we can find the right home (though of course if someone is in a position to help our charitable cause, we wouldn't say no to additional support)
- Amazing care for your home; our residents take pride in their home and everyone has chores to ensure the home is spotless and well cared for
- Staff on site daily and on call 24/7
- The knowledge that your home is making a positive impact on your community.

### **Why Not Buy a Home?**

We get this question a lot. We would love to buy a home if we could! But, we're facing unprecedented need for our mental health and addiction supports, and simply don't have the capital required, particularly in this housing and interest rate environment. If you think you might be able to help us purchase a home somehow, we would love to hear from you!

### **Are You Ready to Help?**

We're ready to hear from you. Please reach out to Cameron Dearlove, Porchlight Executive Director, at [camerond@porchlightcnd.org](mailto:camerond@porchlightcnd.org) or 519-621-5090 x 252.

Don't have a house to offer? You can still help! Perhaps you know an individual, business, service club, or faith community who might be in a position to help. Please pass this letter on to them. And of course, if you are able to support us with a charitable donation to support our work, we would be so grateful. You can learn more at [www.porchlightcnd.org/donate](http://www.porchlightcnd.org/donate).

We thank you for your consideration, and look forward to finding a solution together.

Yours in community,

Cameron Dearlove