

June 19, 2014

**To our valued volunteers and supporters at Inn From The Cold,**

It is with great regret that we will soon say farewell to our Executive Director, Brenda Northey, who is resigning effective July 4, 2014.

We are saddened by her announcement and the vacancy she will leave, but grateful for the solid foundation Brenda has built in her three and a half years of dedicated service to the Inn.

Brenda was instrumental in many key developments at the Inn over the last few years. In particular, she propelled the Inn's services to a self-sustaining model that now includes a thriving catering business, health and wellness and employment programs.

With your continued support, we will ease into a new era at the Inn, as we recruit and appoint a new Executive Director. We will keep you updated as we work through the transition. In the interim, the Board will continue to manage and administer the business of the Inn.

The Board would like to express its sincere gratitude and appreciation to Brenda for her significant contributions to the Inn. We hope the members will join us as the Board wishes her every success in her plans to pursue new opportunities.

Sincerely,

Joy Hulton, Board Chair

Board members:

Dan Kuzmyk

Kelly Tomlinson

Joan Shaw

Wayne Ford

Sheila Gregory

# Inn from the Cold helps marginalized bounce back

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A single Newmarket mother, Renée Colley, 38, suffered long from anxiety and, more recently, from postpartum depression.

An automobile collision further stifled her quality of life and ability to look for, let alone find, work.

Darren Harper, 45, was a teenager when he was diagnosed with a brain chemical imbalance. Without delving into detail, the Newmarket resident admits to having had a lot of issues on his plate and is always battling anything with structure.

A bad past, prison time and health problems, including manic depression, took its toll on Bradford's Ron Vanderlinde, 52. The range of torments detoured his life and precluded him from finding meaningful employment.

Three people with diverse backgrounds, they are now colleagues.

The common thread connecting their uncommon lives is Inn From The Cold Inc., a pleasant, single-floor structure tucked in a Newmarket industrial corridor.

Principally recognized for the past decade as a homeless shelter during winter months, the Inn, under the guidance of executive director Brenda Northey, has evolved into a multi-service hub

dedicated to helping homeless and at-risk people find shelter, skills training, employment opportunities and health and wellness services.

Formerly a competitive skater, ice show impresario and founder of Beatrice House, a Toronto shelter for single moms and their children, Ms Northey is in her sophomore year at the Inn. Her eclectic experiences affords the non-profit Inn a meld of competent and compassionate leadership and a model of collaborative services delivering results.

Ms Colley enthusiastically attests to the success of the hub concept.

At loose ends, she was referred to the Inn's employment program by her Canadian Mental Health Association case worker. Ms Colley enrolled in the catering social enterprise course, a six-week program that trains up to eight people per four yearly sessions. She learned how to use and clean kitchen machinery and how to create menus prepared and sold through the enterprise.

Participants with promise are invited to work part-time for the catering business. Ms Colley, under the tutelage of chef Donna Olding, was selected.

"I've worked in sales and financial services, but my passion was

always in the kitchen," the mom of a two-year son and 20-year-old daughter said. "This is career dream come true and I have so much to look forward to on the path from here."

She attributes her new well-being to caseworker Lisa Wood, Inn employment and shelter manager Ray Rauth and Ms Northey.

"I feel much better about things now," Ms Colley said.

"I've been given the opportunity to grow, open up and not be stifled or closed."

Mr Harper decided to take the Inn's comprehensive three-month employment program, an initiative geared to clients deemed unemployable due to issues, including health and criminal offences. He learned cooking, woodworking, computer literacy and behavioral life skills, he said with an easy smile. Additionally, he picked up journaling, meditation, drama and financial planning skills.

The classes are designed to make participants marketable, increase confidence and align them with on-site internships and potential employers in the community, Ms Northey said.

Since the early summer, Mr Harper is the Inn's catering business delivery driver.

"It feels good to be doing something useful," he said. "It's nice to

fit in. I'm 100-per-cent grateful. I did the classes and got a job."

He recommends the Inn's offerings to anyone who is struggling.

"Yes, especially if you want more out of life."

Mr Harper's enthusiasm and dedication to his studies and job has prompted the Inn to create a special award, Mr Rauth said. Beginning Dec. 1, the Darren Harper Award will honour Inn clients who take initiative, he said.

Mr Vanderlinde's kind face and gentle voice belies a troubled past. Determined to make a difference in his life, he enrolled and completed the catering course. For the past 18 months, he has served as the Inn's custodian and kitchen helper.

"Inn From Out of the Cold has helped me come out of my shell, helped me with housing, my resume and employment," he said. "In the past, I didn't enjoy work. Now I do. I have friendship and I meet a lot of interesting people with similar backgrounds. It's helpful to learn how they've dealt with things."

The hub, still in its relative infancy, is viable and vital, Mr Rauth said. Participants, program grads and employees meet weekly with Inn staff and volunteers with various areas of expertise.

"It's a collective effort, a team

approach where everyone can talk about barriers and give their opinions," he said.

The hub is also successful. Attendance in the programs is full, 85 per cent of grads find employment and 95 per cent keep their jobs, he said. The catering enterprise has achieved sales of \$3,200 per month, mostly to other non-profit agencies.

The Inn continues to offer short-term winter housing seven days a week from mid-November to March. More than 280 volunteers run the shelter that can accommodate up to 30 guests per night.

Last season, the shelter had 2,249 guest visits. Community meals, supported by the John Howard Society of York Region and numerous local church groups, a staple every Friday, serves between 60 and 80 people.

The third of the Inn's service prongs is health and wellness, Ms Northey said. A collaborative effort with various regional health and public services, including York Region Police, Southlake Regional Health Centre and Addiction Services of York Region, expertise is brought on site. The strategy prevents duplication of services and, for clients, fewer transportation issues.