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23 Gordon St, Guelph,  
ON N1H 4G9

May 20/25

## Letter of Support for Daytime Shelter Space

Dear Mayor Cam Guthrie and Members of Guelph City Council

This letter is in support of moving forward with a competitive procurement process for daytime shelter and community space for individuals at risk of homelessness or experiencing homelessness in our community.

Over the years the Stepping Stone previously known as the Drop In Centre has focused all of its efforts on supporting the most vulnerable individuals and families in our community. The Stepping Stone (Drop In Centre) started providing a day time community space in 1983 in downtown Guelph in various locations over the years. In 1985 the Drop In Centre opened its first homeless shelter called the Stepping Stone. Stepping Stone (Drop In Centre) has done both work in community spaces and responding to the homelessness need as it evolved.

Since 2020 the increase of both the number of individuals experiencing homelessness along with the increased complexity of need in our community highlighted the importance of creating more shelter spaces along with more fulsome support to meet the need. At this time the Stepping Stone (Drop In Centre) closed its daytime community space and focused on housing focused responses to homelessness, including housing projects like Grace Gardens and the expansion of 23 Gordon.

In 2020 the Stepping Stone was providing shelter to approximately 50 individuals per night and in 2025 we are now providing between 130 - 150 shelter spaces per night. In 2024 we saw 661 unique individuals coming through our shelter program. The increase of numbers and complex needs demonstrates the importance of meeting the need in the best way as a community, which is why the Stepping Stone remains committed to working collaboratively with community partners to help ensure that people experiencing homelessness have access to the support and spaces they need, when they need them.

As a community we still need to continue to be focused on creating solutions to homelessness through building supportive and deeply affordable housing options but when individuals are experiencing absolute homelessness we also need to meet them exactly where they are at in that moment.



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The Stepping Stone strongly supports the resourcing of a daytime space to support individuals in our community that are experiencing homelessness. It is so important for people to have access to their basic needs such as food, washrooms and showers in a safe space. In addition these spaces also create an opportunity to build a sense of belonging without judgement which is critical on someone's journey to finding their own health, housing and most importantly a sense of community!

Warmly,  
Gail Hoekstra