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A Quarterly Insight into Grind Operations

Summer 2020

coffee break

current topic >>>

Welcome to the Grind's new newsletter - Coffee Break

Welcome to the first issue of Coffee Break, a newsletter to help keep our community informed about activities and services offered by The Grind Pembroke from its facilities in Pembroke, Ontario.

This first issue will focus on fundraising and what success (or failure) can do to our bottom line. As a volunteer-based charity with no sustainable funding from government or elsewhere, The Grind must constantly match its current operations and dreams for the future to some source of one-time financial support.

Whether that source is a government grant, a community organization donation, a local fundraising event, or by reaching out to individual donors, the need for operational funds is relentless and time consuming. And one of the ironies is that one must often spend money to make money!

Fundraising initiatives

Some successes . . . or not!

The year 2020 started out on a bright note with the success of The Grind's principal fund raising event – Coldest Night of the Year. Grossing over \$43,000, the event proceeds will be directed towards creating a Community Kitchen and to Transition House operations.

About the time staff and volunteers of the Coffee House were settling into another year of operations, COVID-19 hit with a vengeance. With the closure of Coffee House routine operations for health protection reasons, the facility was quickly turned into a functional kitchen able to provide increasing numbers of patrons with take-out lunches.

But it was clear from the onset that demand for food

and supplies would soon outstrip the organization's ability to cover the costs. Luckily, several provincial and federal government COVID-19 relief funding programs were announced prompting The Grind to set in motion an extensive effort to prepare documentation and make application to meet tight deadlines.

The first fund announced was provincial COVID relief funding through County of Renfrew Social Services. An application was successfully submitted for \$37,700 over a four-month period (2020 May – August) to cover additional wages for an expanded take-out meal program to include four breakfasts and two dinners per week, for health, safety . . . /2



Fundraising con't

... and security measures, for renovations in the Coffee House to ensure staff, volunteer and patron safety, to rent a van to enable food supply pickup and delivery of prepared meals to patrons unable to attend the take-out service in person, and to purchase additional food to cover the expanded food service.

The second funding opportunity arose from federal government COVID-19 relief funding from the Homelessness Strategy – Rural and Remote Homelessness Program administered by United Way Simcoe Muskoka. The Grind submitted an application for \$99,676 for the period 2020 September – 2021 March 31 to cover the costs of modifying the Coffee House to accommodate a temporary kitchen, to provide additional wages for a cook, additional food purchases for breakfast and dinner take-out services, emergency food kits and meals for the patrons of applicant partner, St. Vincent de Paul Society, for additional janitorial wages, for additional wages and

supplies to ensure on-going health and safety, and for additional wages for a van driver and van rental. The application was successful but the monetary award was reduced to \$79,741.

The third funding opportunity to secure COVID-19 relief support was through the federal government's Economic Response Plan administered by United Way East Ontario. The Grind submitted an application for \$109,341 but unfortunately it was rejected. The funds would have been used to set up a food rescue operation to meet a gap in food supply caused by the closure of the Salvation Army Food Bank, to extend the rental of the van being used to secure food supplies, deliver prepared meals and undertake wellness checks of homeless individuals around the city, to re-open the Grind's Emergency Refuge to allow homeless men to use the shower, laundry and washroom facilities, and finally to provide wages for coordination of all of the Grind's COVID-19 response activities.



Transition House – an assisted independent living facility for homeless men in Pembroke.

It's open!

After a year or more of renovations, made possible by generous community donations and a grant of \$100,000 from Mental Health Services of Renfrew County / Pembroke Regional Hospital and others, the facility opened on 2020 May 14 to its first client. (more on p. 3)

Response to COVID-19

The Grind steps up to the plate . . . again!

With the help of government COVID-19 relief funding and the on-going support of dedicated volunteers, The Grind Pembroke expanded its food service offering to at-risk community members, including the homeless, who are especially vulnerable during the pandemic. In addition to the daily lunch offering Tuesday – Friday that began in March, 2019, when the Salvation Army abandoned its clients in Pembroke, The Grind was able to add take-out breakfasts over the same period plus two dinners on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Area grocery stores have been generous with their food donations to sustain this critical food service. For those patrons who cannot pick up their . . . /3



The Grind's Transition House – without shelter & food there is no hope

In keeping with the Federal Government's homelessness philosophy 'Housing First', The Grind Pembroke, in partnership with caring and generous community members – both individual and corporate – embarked on a two-year mission to assist homeless men who made a commitment to change their lives.



Refuge in 2016, Grind staff and volunteers quickly realized that emergency sheltering was only the first step of a long journey for those homeless who were willing to accept help to get themselves back on track.

Beyond emergency sheltering, the homeless need accommodations that are appropriate to their stage of recovery. The key to success is therefore the availability of transitional housing with supports suited to the individual's needs. Once stabilized, then more conventional, commercially available housing can be considered.

It's true – without a roof over their heads and food in their stomachs – the homeless cannot focus on addressing their issues. While a lot more supports have to be in place to give hope to those who for whatever reason find themselves without shelter and the basics of life, stable housing is critical.

After interacting with homeless community members since it opened its small Emergency

After trying to find a cost-effective way to help the homeless beyond emergency sheltering without much success, the estate of a generous deceased community member came to the rescue. A late-1800s vintage, 2.5 storey house was offered to the Grind in late 2017 and gratefully accepted.

(con't on p. 4)



Food facts

*It sounds incredible, but The Grind's Community Kitchen has, since taking over the service from the Salvation Army in March, 2019, prepared and served **13,430** meals including breakfasts, lunches and dinners. A big "thank you" to our cooks, Karen Fraser and Dave Waito, and their volunteer kitchen helpers!*

COVID-19 .../con't

... meals in person due to illness, infirmity or the need to shelter, The Grind, through the use of a rented van, arranges delivery of prepared meals to those who qualify and who register with the Client Services Office.

As an added bonus in having use of the van during the hot, humid weather conditions we've been experiencing over the past few weeks, our trepid Community Kitchen support staff Andrew Bailey and Tanner Barnes have been scouring the favourite haunts of some of our homeless clients who prefer to remain outside rather than reside in a motel to ensure their safety. These "wellness checks" allow Grind staff to ensure these clients are hydrated, have nourishment if they don't make it up to The Grind at meal time, and to enquire if they need other supports.

Believe it or not >>>

Q: *Does homelessness exist in Renfrew County?*

A: *Yes, and here are some facts . . .*

The Grind Pembroke, one of several agencies and organizations in Renfrew County who serve the at-risk population, has provided help to individuals who are acute (e.g. short-term) and chronic (e.g. long-term) homeless since it opened its Coffee House in October, 2015. Since it opened its Emergency Refuge in December, 2016, The Grind has arranged accommodations in that facility until it was closed in September, 2018, for financial reasons, and subsequently in local motels, to 82 homeless in 2017, 118 in 2018 and 35 in 2019.



We're moving . . . in the near future

After more than a thirteen month search, The Grind Pembroke has found a new home to house its entire operation, including a viable Community Kitchen.

The Grind Pembroke agreed to take on responsibility for Pembroke's Community Kitchen (the successor to the closed Salvation Army Soup Kitchen) in late 2019 after the community Task Force was unable to find a sponsor.

One condition was that a suitable site, preferably with an existing commercial kitchen, be secured as the temporary location within The Grind's Coffee House, wasn't suitable for the long-term. The other stipulation was that such a site had to have the capacity to accommodate all of the Grind's programs and services as the organization could not operate two separate sites.

After months searching in vain for an appropriate location that met the needs of the

service as well as being financially viable, the Community Kitchen Task Force was offered the City of Pembroke's decommissioned fire hall adjacent to Victoria Hall at the end of Victoria Street adjacent to the downtown district.

Following a period of negotiations, The Grind Board signed a five-year lease of the property on 2020 June 18, and took possession on July 1. While waiting for the completion of detailed engineering drawings that will guide renovations work, interior work has begun to remove non-essential features.

The facility will house the new Community Kitchen and Coffee House in two of the large truck bays; the third truck bay will house a new program – a food rescue operation that will include a food sorting and food storage area



plus a public food distribution space patterned on a mini-mart model. New washrooms will be constructed in one of the small storage bays, while the second small bay will house part of the Client Services Office. The reception counter and offices for the system navigation professionals from partner agencies and Algonquin College Social Service Worker students will be located in the old administrative area. The Grind's administrative functions will be located on the second level. A multi-purpose room at the rear of the building will be used as a platform for outreach information programs and training.

While timing is flexible, the hope is that essential services can begin operation in late Fall 2020.

Transition House . . . con't

Following two years of fundraising, thanks to the support of Algonquin College students who raised over \$11,000 during Project Hope for the Homeless, funds from Coldest Night of the Year and, in particular, a \$3,000 donation from a generous individual, plus \$10,000 from the Sisters of St. Joseph, and a grant of \$100,000 from Mental Health Services of Renfrew County / Pembroke Regional Hospital, renovations were accelerated and completed in time to move the first occupant into the house on 2020 May 14.

The house, while owned by The Grind, is operated by Mental Health Services under a service agreement.



Join in the Fun!

**Support The Grind's
Transition House
Saturday, 2020 Oct. 3**

**Register On-Line
rideforrefuge.org/thegrindpembroke**

coming soon >>>

In The Next Issue

Client Services Office - status

Fundraising for the Big Move

*Shelter Services – a phone call
away*

. . . and more

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