



Canadian Mental
Health Association
Cowichan Valley



For Immediate Release

CMHA Cowichan Valley Branch and Cowichan Tribes Partner Work Together to Open Extreme Weather Shelter



The CMHA Cowichan Valley Branch, in partnership with Cowichan Tribes, is pleased to announce the opening of a new Extreme Weather Shelter in the Cowichan Tribes gymnasium at 5574 River Road in Duncan. The shelter will open Friday, January 22, 2021.

BC Housing provides funding for the establishment of temporary Extreme Weather Shelter beds for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. The new shelter will alleviate some of the pressure on Warmland House, which will continue to operate on Lewis Street. The new Extreme Weather Shelter on River Road will be operated and staffed by the CMHA and will be able to accommodate up to 30 people each night. “For so many, homelessness is not a choice but working together in the spirit of caring and kindness is” says CMHA Executive Director Lise Haddock. “As the cold weather approaches, it’s wonderful to know that people will be warm, safe and secure. Thank you Cowichan Nation for opening the doors of your respected house Si’em lelum to provide much needed shelter.”

A typical stay at an emergency shelter includes a bed with linens, hot meals, showers and access to laundry and support services. Stays may range from



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one night to longer depending on client needs. The new shelter is open to anyone that needs a warm, dry place to sleep. It will be open from 8pm until 8am each day and is expected to remain open until Spring when the weather improves.

Marnie Elliott, Associate Health Director at Cowichan Tribes says “Nuts'amaat shqwaluwun, (One Mind, One Heart) is the basis of how we work together. It is an honour to share our space at the Si'em lelum Gymnasium in partnership with CMHA to provide a safe, warm environment for our community. I believe that it's collaborations like this that when we work together, we are not walking alone.

I am thankful for the many minds and hearts that have come together to also walk with our community on their healing journey.”

People who stay at emergency shelters can be diverse, with a range of needs and abilities. Staff will require appropriate behaviour, but this shelter will reduce barriers to ensure the most vulnerable people are brought inside and connected to support services.

The CMHA-CVB looks forward to providing even more shelter opportunities for some of our community's most vulnerable persons. We thank Cowichan Tribes for supporting this project and we look forward to working together.

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