

Shelter
from the
Darkness

The INN

St. Thomas-Elgin

"The INN
St. Thomas-Elgin
seeks to provide safe,
temporary shelter to
individuals 16 and over
while supporting all
basic human needs and
reducing barriers to
obtain housing."

NOVEMBER 2022

Operated by Inn Out of the Cold St. Thomas-Elgin | REGISTERED CHARITY #807524467RR0001

SHELTER: Open 24/7

10 Princess Avenue
St. Thomas ON N5R 3V2
519-637-9898

Message from the BOARD PRESIDENT

board@innelgin.ca | 905-864-9298



A SUCCESS STORY

James (name changed for privacy purposes) was a young man struggling with mental health and addiction for most of his teenage years and into his adult life. He had been badly injured playing his favourite sport, and became addicted to the pain medication prescribed for him. When his medication ran out he turned to the streets to find more. This lasted for about four years and James regularly depended on The INN as a place to get warm, eat, and at times to sleep. Our staff worked hard for two years to build a relationship of trust and respect with James. Eventually he started asking for and accepting support. Over time, and through several other community connections, James was able to make the courageous decision to leave The INN and enrol in rehab. James is currently working hard to continue his road of recovery. He is now 14 months sober and we couldn't be prouder of his success!!

The INN is working to support those in our community experiencing homelessness while also providing the basic needs of many. We work in partnerships with our many dedicated volunteers and local agencies including the St. Thomas Police Service and their Mobile Outreach Support Team, the Canadian Mental Health Association, Thames Valley Addiction Services and Mental Health, Central Community Health Centre, The City of St. Thomas, Indwell, the YWCA and more. These partnerships allow our guests to access mental health, addictions, medical, financial and housing services. We are grateful to our many partners. Working together we can support MANY!

We are at full capacity almost every day and night, and our team works tirelessly to do the best for our guests. During our first 7 months at the new shelter:

- our housing focused case managers have been heavily involved in helping 22 guests move into a place of their own

We are hoping to increase our monthly donor program. This predictable source of income will allow us to focus more on meeting our guests needs and less on fundraising. Smaller donations throughout the year are often more manageable for the average donor and spreading out the donation may even allow you to contribute more than you originally thought. For example, spending \$500 all at once might be too much for your monthly budget to handle, but if donating \$50 every month is doable, you will actually donate \$600 by the end of the year! Never feel obligated to make a large donation, every dollar will make a difference and help us to help others.

- we have served over 12,000 meals
- a medical clinic with a physician and nurses from Central Community Health Centre attend to illnesses, and helps our guests understand when and how to take their medications
- each day of the week a different agency is available to help with housing, mental health, addictions and more.

The INN has changed lives!! As you appreciate through **James'** story (see left column) - the course is slow, but you see how one life at a time can be changed with a new future ahead! We cannot do this without community support. The INN is reaching out to you because we know your priorities are in tune with the specific needs of people like James. We are asking you to consider a donation to The INN that will enable our guests to continue getting the life changing support they need.

Margaret Barrie

INN HONOUREES Elgin-Middlesex-London's Platinum Jubilee Celebration

Hundreds of nominations were submitted to the office of MP Karen Vecchio. The INN is delighted that three of our team were selected in the Summer of 2022 to receive the Community Commitment award:

Lori Fitzgerald, Executive Director
Christina Hoffer, Program Manager
Sandy Westaway, Past Board President

CHRISTINA HOFFER

submitted by nominator, Lisa Loucks (Marriott/Starwood)

"I have grown to know Christina over the past 13 years. She is one of the most compassionate, resourceful, and determined women I know. As a single mother, she has divided her time between raising 2 amazing children and helping the community. Christina has supported the Inn Out of the Cold raising awareness for the homeless in our community and engaging efforts from Marriott (formerly Starwood) to support volunteer efforts and donations. Her efforts were recognized when she was asked to join their support staff at the Inn out of the Cold in 2020. Christina has volunteered for several years for Victim Services Elgin devoting countless hours overnight and weekends to support members of our community in need.

Christina has a passion to give to others which inspires the spirit to serve in all those who meet her. She works within the community to drive awareness by doing presentations for service providers, attending community events, and responding to calls from first responders where victims of crime and tragic circumstances require assistance. She has worked with people who suffer from homelessness, addictions, and mental health issues. She will work tirelessly to help people find housing, food, and safety.

Christina knows the homeless and underprivileged. She has made it her mission to engage and gain the trust of those who depend on our community for a second chance. She will give the last dollar she has to help other, and it is for that reason she is so deserving of this recognition."



Lori Fitzgerald and
Karen Vecchio



Karen Vecchio and
Christina Hoffer

Built for Zero

Built for Zero is a national change effort with a goal to help a core group of leading communities, including St. Thomas-Elgin, end chronic homelessness and veteran homelessness – a first step on the path to eliminating all homelessness in Canada.

In August 2021, a baseline of 75 people experiencing homelessness was set in St. Thomas-Elgin after the completion of a quality by-name list, a real-time list of all known people experiencing homelessness in the community. Less than a year later, the first reduction milestone as determined by Built for Zero was reached in our community when a 10% or greater reduction in chronic homelessness below baseline was maintained for three consecutive months. Impressively, data from June 2022 shows a 25% reduction in chronic homelessness and according to Built for Zero Canada Director Marie Morrison, St. Thomas-Elgin was the 8th community in Canada to reach this first key milestone. This is a result of teamwork, partnerships and dedication across stakeholders, community service providers, and those experiencing homelessness.

Each time a staff member completes an intake with a guest of The INN and submits a Paper Readiness Document to the City of St. Thomas, the efforts to reduce homelessness and support the Built for Zero efforts across St. Thomas-Elgin are being supported. Between January 26, 2022 and June 30, 2022, The INN has been directly involved in 22 guests transitioning from the shelter to housing. We are proud at The INN to be a part of the efforts in our community to reduce and eliminate homelessness, and remain motivated and dedicated to continue working in close collaboration with community partners, stakeholders and those with lived experience.



SHAMROCK
SHUFFLE 2023



While it was not possible for us to hold the event in 2021 and 2022 during the pandemic, mark your calendar for the 10th annual event **Saturday, March 18, 2023**. It will include a 2 k and 5 k walk and a 5 k run. Volunteers will be needed in many areas. Check out our Facebook page The Shamrock Shuffle | Facebook for ongoing updates and opportunities to become involved.

Friends and local business owners - if you're starting to think about your charitable donations for 2023 please keep The INN St. Thomas-Elgin and the Shamrock Shuffle in mind! Email donations@innelgin.ca or theshamrockshuffle@gmail.com if you would like to learn more.



Q&A CORNER

You are now at your new site, which includes bunk beds. Why do I see guests sleeping on the lawn and boulevard in front of The INN?

The INN is a 24-hour emergency shelter that has the ability to support 40 individuals with a bed space. To maintain the health and safety of our guests and the building, we close the sleeping area from 11 am to 2 pm daily for cleaning. The guests staying in shelter are encouraged to enjoy lunch in the drop in space, spend some time in the patio area, or go out into the community. Our homeless community also experience a lot of violence, and keeping their personal belongings safe is a big issue for them. For that reason, some people who are experiencing homelessness choose to be very visible and sleep in plain sight. By being visible, it can also help them feel safe enough to get some rest.

CUSTODIAN HELP WANTED

Currently we are seeking one or two individuals to work weekends, generally a 5 hour shift between 9 am and 2 pm to maintain the cleanliness of our 3 story homeless shelter at 10 Princess Avenue, St. Thomas.

Are you available every Saturday? Every Sunday? Every other weekend? Or perhaps you are interested in joining us every Saturday and Sunday?

The full job posting is available on our website, innelgin.ca, email applications to jobs@innelgin.ca or drop off at the shelter.

Come clean with us!

I'd like to donate a dinner meal. Do I just bring it over around 4:00 pm?

The INN serves three meals a day: breakfast 6:30 to 7:30 am, lunch from 12 noon until 1:00 pm, and dinner from 6:30 to 7:30 pm. Our Food Services Coordinator plans meals a week in advance based on the items we have on site, and donations we have received. By phoning the shelter 519-637-9898 you can speak with a staff member about making arrangements to provide a meal. Donated meals must be prepared in a Public Health certified kitchen. Items such as sandwiches, fruit and vegetable trays, baked goods etc. can be donated as long as they have been properly stored. Based on Canada's Food Safety Guide, we are unable to accept some donations if they have been sitting out for more than an hour. Contacting the shelter will enable us to speak with you about the donation and determine if we can accept it. Our Food Services Coordinator will ensure the donation is served to our guests.

When I walked by The INN, I thought somebody out front was there with my recently stolen bicycle, and I was so tempted to go over to confront them, and take my bicycle back.

Lately INN staff and security have noticed an increase in members of the community approaching our shelter to confront guests. Although we understand that there are times one of our guests may have done something or said something unkind, we do ask that you contact the police rather than confront a guest. Many of our guests have mental health and addiction struggles, and confronting them could result in further escalation or acts of violence. If you believe a crime has been committed, contacting the police is the best option. Staff and security of The INN make every attempt to keep guests safe, and we want to do the same for our community members as well.

When a member of the community has questions or concerns about the shelter, we encourage you to contact the shelter directly. We have management on site most days and evenings. 519.637.9898.

SHELTER GUESTS Giving Back

As the staff at The INN look to ways to teach shelter guests new life skills, promote self confidence and a positive sense of self, as well as pride in accomplishments, they are encouraged guests to take care of their surroundings with such tasks as:

- serving drinks (coffee, tea, hot chocolate, juice)
- cleaning dining tables
- sweeping and mopping floors
- keeping their dorm bed space and locker clean
- emptying garbage containers and taking the trash to the outdoor bin
- cleaning up the patio and the outside area around the shelter
- shoveling snow to keep the sidewalks accessible and safe for the public, as well as emergency services

Guests are enjoying this opportunity to give back to shelter staff and volunteers and see this as a way to show their thanks.

Calendar FOR A CAUSE

A segment that aired on London tv news in June led to The INN being one of six charities selected by "Miss Marcie", whose work is known throughout southern Ontario. Marcie Riegling (host/writer/producer) is passionate about supporting not-for-profits and has created eight charity calendars in the past six years.

What did this involve? Well it started with 12 community minded individuals volunteering to be models for the calendar and the accompanying show this Fall on Bell's Fibe TV. The show will bring viewers behind the scenes for the exciting before/after photo shoot reveals. The photo shoot took place in July with the models dressed in costume from the 1950s and posed at the Elgin County Railway Museum.

We can't wait to see the final results in print, and on the TV show! **The \$20.00 calendar will be available at the Horton Farmers Christmas Market in November**, as well as from the models and INN Board members. Please consider purchasing one, or more, in support of The INN. If you would like calendars to sell at your work or retail outlet, please let us know by contacting Amy at adminmanager@innelgin.ca. Thank you for your support!

With special thanks to our models:

Darren Connolly, Horton Farmers Market
 Gregory Dennis, Black Comb Barbershop
 Raymund Fangrad, Canadian Mental Health Association
 Genevieve Fisher, Canadian Country Singer/Songwriter
 Craig Geerlinks, Geerlinks Home Hardware
 Paul Jenkins, St. Thomas & District Chamber of Commerce
 Grayden Laing, Establish Media
 Tara McCaulley, St. Thomas Economic Development Corporation
 Paul Nicli, St. Thomas Railway City Rotary Club
 Joe Preston, City of St. Thomas
 Sarah VanPelt, VanPelt's Business Solutions
 Karen Vecchio, Federal Parliament (Elgin-Middlesex-London)



Sarah VanPelt seated, and London Beauty Academy volunteer stylist.



Tara McCaulley



2022		May	June	July	August
Guests	unique individuals	67	60	59	64
Overnight stays	total for month	810	725	870	1041
	average per night	26	24	28	34
Moved into housing	total for month	3	1	2	1
	average per day	64	83	73	88

COLUMBUS CLUB
50/50



THANK YOU ALL
FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

The Knights of Columbus recently donated a total of \$4754.17 following their **June SummerFest** event, approximately \$1600.00 of which was from our percentage of the 50/50 profits!

Our friends and supporters at the Knights of Columbus are hosting **another 50/50 raffle**. The draw will be held on **December 24, 2022** and tickets can be purchased at the link below. Be sure to select The INN as the member you are supporting when purchasing tickets, and pass that message on to anyone you share the link with!

<https://www.rafflebox.ca/raffle/ccst?cid=50927311-17f3-431f-9e82-6b790aad3909>

Wish List

- Single use laundry detergent pods
- 8 1/2 x 11 letter size copy paper
- Paper cups (no lids, no styrofoam please)
- Plastic cutlery, napkins
- Coffee, tea, hot chocolate
- Sugar, powdered coffee whitener

See innoutofthecoldelgin.com for more items and updated list.

DUE TO OVERSTOCKING OR LACK OF STORAGE, WE CANNOT ACCEPT ANYTHING THAT IS NOT ON OUR CURRENT NEEDS LIST.

If we are unable to accept your items, please donate them to Missions Thrift Store behind Geerlinks Home Hardware on First Avenue. We can access anything we need for our guests from there if needed.