



MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday, July 26, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City provides \$20,000 to Elizabeth Fry Society and John Howard Society for family reunification

(Barrie, ON) – The City of Barrie has delivered \$10,000 to both the Elizabeth Fry Society and John Howard Society to assist with their family reunification programs. As part of a Council motion approved on May 17, 2023, to address chronic homelessness and enhance public safety in Barrie, Council approved funding for a family reunification fund to pay for the transportation costs and help reunite individuals with families or support groups.

"We are committed to building a compassionate and supportive community in Barrie, where no one is left behind," said Mayor Alex Nuttall. "This \$20,000 investment will play a crucial role in reuniting vulnerable individuals with family and support networks in other cities, towns, and even provinces to ensure they receive the resources and stability they deserve. In collaboration with the John Howard Society and Elizabeth Fry Society we can continue to break down barriers and provide a pathway towards a brighter future for individuals looking to rebuild and surround themselves with the vital support system they need to succeed."

"At the John Howard Society of Simcoe & Muskoka, we provide a diverse range of programs & services to communities across the county, including institutional services and reintegration supports," said Hayley Murdoch-Fyke, Executive Director of John Howard Society of Simcoe & Muskoka. "With the generous support from the City of Barrie through the Family Reunification fund, we are now able to assist vulnerable people released from the Central North Correctional Centre in relocating to areas where they can connect with their supports and families."

"Not having the financial means to travel to another city or town can pose barriers for someone trying to access temporary or permanent housing solutions. Funding to facilitate out-of-city transportation is not typically something most not-for-profit organizations have available to bridge this gap," said Meaghan Chambers, Executive Director of Elizabeth Fry Society Simcoe Muskoka. "The reunification funds provided by the City of Barrie will allow us to cover the cost of transit for folks who are criminalized and experiencing homelessness to access housing options and support networks that may be available to them in other communities of their choice."

In January 2022 the homeless enumeration was conducted in Simcoe County and 722 people were counted as experiencing homelessness. Of this number at least 50% are homeless in Barrie.

- 30 -

For more information, please contact:

Emma Sharpe
Communications Advisor
emma.sharpe@barrie.ca
705-794-0416