

To whom this may concern,

We are writing on behalf of the Board of Directors for the Heritage Community Association.

Camp Hope was set up in the Heritage Neighborhood by a group of volunteers to assist people facing homelessness in Regina. The inciting factor for a recent surge in homelessness has been changes to the Ministry of Social Services Saskatchewan Income Support Program.

Although we were disheartened to have Camp Hope exist out of desperation, we fully supported accommodating the camp within the Heritage Neighborhood. We reached out as board members, as an organization, and as private citizens to assist in providing basic needs and protection for our fellow human beings who are finding themselves in crisis.

Camp Hope illuminated the issues of poverty, homelessness, food insecurity, and lack of access to mental health and substance use disorder supports. ***This is a public health crisis in our community and demands immediate action by our elected officials.*** We call all levels of government to action in providing the much needed and, in fact, escalating need for affordable housing and food security. Our vulnerable neighbors also deserve equitable and accessible access to health care, including mental health supports, safe injection sites, and timely admission to rehabilitation and healing facilities.

We believe that safe, adequate, affordable housing, food, and water are vital human rights. They are the foundation all people need to be healthy and successful in their own journeys. No one should live without access to these. We are grateful to the City of Regina for setting up a temporary place for many camp residents to shelter. However, we know the space could only accommodate 40 people, and there were roughly 100 residents at Camp Hope, with others in the community coming for meals and access to warm winter gear. We ask that further measures continue to be taken so that those excluded from the initial move due to space availability and other concerns are not forgotten.

As our elected representatives, we implore you to use your position to work collaboratively with the former Camp Hope residents and others in similar situations to support the development and implementation of programs and services which meet their needs. We acknowledge and appreciate the effort taken to find an emergency housing solution considering the onset of Saskatchewan winter conditions. We look forward to seeing these actions evolve into long term, sustainable solutions.

Sincerely,

Heritage Community Association Board of Directors