

Overnight at the Trust

By Kristena Schutt-Moore

When the temperature dropped down to -32 degrees on the evening of Thursday, Feb. 2 the North Hastings Community Trust opened up their space at 19 Valleyview Drive. Due to the emergency the Trust volunteers decided to let people with nowhere else to go use their space to stay warm. They have been open every night since then. Currently they have had up to 11 people coming in throughout a night to use the space on a cold night. In their press release the Trust said that the people who have been staying at the Trust have been putting in a lot of effort to make the program work well and that others have been volunteering a lot of time, food and love. The Trust wrote, "Thank you to everyone who has been working so hard to make this happen. We especially thank the residents of Valleyview Drive for their patience and understanding during this too-sudden launch of the program. Together we can make our space a safe and caring overnight environment. All of us need help from time to time and all of us can help. We can do this together." The Overnight at the Trust Program will be held every night at the North Hastings Community Trust until March 30. The doors will open at 9 p.m. and close at 7 a.m. They are also hosting a Breakfast Club from 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. To host these programs the Trust is looking for community support, whether it is from individuals or community organizations. Currently they are looking for volunteers for the night shift from 8:30 p.m. to 12 a.m. Two volunteers are needed each night to provide support, kindness and supervision. Those volunteering can stay longer if they are able to so, the support is welcome, but not necessary. The volunteers will be working with two professional security guards, who have been trained to help in all situations including overdoses. There will also be training for the volunteers, and each volunteer has to participate in the training. Those interested are asked to sign up by calling Kianne at 613-334-6165. The volunteers for the morning shift and Breakfast Club are asked to cover the 6:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. shift. One volunteer is needed to come into the Trust at 6:00 a.m. to take over providing support when the security guards leave at 7 a.m. The second volunteer's shift will start at 7 a.m. to make coffee and serve food. Breakfast supplies will be provided, so volunteers are not asked to bring in food. The two volunteers on morning shift will be there to provide support and help those that stayed overnight and to close up the space when everyone leaves at 10 a.m. Those interested in volunteering for the morning shift and/or Breakfast Club are asked to contact Sherri at 613-553-5723 or online at the Trust's link of the Meal Train website <https://www.mealtrain.com/trains/4rlno2>. The Trust is receiving funding from the County of Hastings to help them stay open overnight, at the time of printing the total amount was not released. They are also looking for community support, donations of any kind are welcome and donation can be made either online at the Trust's website www.northhastingscommunitytrust.org or in person at their office at 19 Valleyview Drive. Charitable receipts are available. Other than financial donations the Trust is also looking for food and supplies. While they do not operate as a food bank they do provide services such as the Breakfast Program. Some of their most requested items are Ensure and Boost drinks, granola bars, candy, gum, and portable packaged foods. Many community members have also brought in hot crock-pot meals, soups and the makings for sandwiches and the Trust says that the people coming in to use the space on cold nights very much appreciate this. One of their largest food needs is coffee, coffee supplies and other hot beverages, as they go through a lot of coffee and hot drinks each night. The Trust is also looking to provide some supplies to those that use the Trust's space at night. Those that do not have shelter in winter have a greater need for warm clothing. The Trust is looking for warm clothing, gloves, Hot Paws hand warmers, sanitary items and basics such as deodorant and lip chap. One of the biggest items that they are in need of is large warm socks for keeping feet and legs warm during the cold winter months. Equipment is also a big need. Due to the regulations that govern shelters the Trust can not be a shelter. This means that they can not use items such as cots and mats for people to lie down on to sleep. So, instead the Trust is looking for items such as gravity chairs and recliners with washable surfaces. The Trust is also looking to get their kitchen up and running to make things easier for the Breakfast Club. To do this they are looking for lockers, storage containers, coffee makers and other kitchen equipment so that they can store and make food items. Those interested in helping with this are asked to call 613-332-3657. The Trust said in their press release, "It is in times of emergency that communities pull together. Thank you so much for your support in so many ways."