

## **Submission to Regina City Council by Ron Richmond in support for budgetary action on Homelessness**

**December 15, 2022**

My name is Ron Richmond, retired educator, concerned citizen, and family member helping to support three North Central families struggling with mental health issues, poverty and addictions. I'm here to support the recommendation to include funding in the 2023 City of Regina budget to address our homelessness crisis.

Forty-seven years ago, our family adopted a child that later was diagnosed as having FASD effects. Her story was featured in an early book on the subject written and published by Dr Mavis Oleson, retired Superintendent of Education, Regina Public system. For these many years, we have attempted to give support, not only to this daughter, but also to her children, grandchildren, and spouses... now a total of 10. All reside in North Central. The effects of FASD are multi-generational. In giving support, we find success in degrees, but satisfaction, too, in being there when needed as we are able.

As adoptive parents we have struggled with our own assumptions of how individuals should learn from experience and emerge as responsible, self-reliant individuals. The reality is that mental health issues contribute profoundly to a subculture of poverty, marginalization, and a general sense of despair. The effects can be devastating.

While our formal education systems have been increasingly responsive to the social and individual needs of children, I have come to value the role of the volunteer community, often initiated by churches and other community groups, in providing many kinds of family and community supports. Recently I've chosen to highlight and promote this work in a personal website: [www.RRVista.net/Regina-Helps/](http://www.RRVista.net/Regina-Helps/).

The quality of life we might aspire to is a shared responsibility of individual, family, community, and governments (at all three levels). While money is important, the building of lives and community occurs primarily through personal interactions and relationships. Hence money, while necessary, is not sufficient. This is why I appreciate the Housing First, Supportive Housing model. It is a collaborative model.

It addresses both existing needs for survival while emphasizing realistically the needs for guidance and personal learning. It functions in a healthy context of respect and hope. While much charity work is reactive aid, the Housing First and Support model is proactive and developmental, addressing core issues and needs.

The Housing First with Support model is also flexible in the ways it may be implemented, and offers both centralized and decentralized options for broad participation and engagement. While centralized funding and a degree of structural leadership is essential, the model can be adapted broadly to include collaboration with the many existing agencies in delivery of services. We need it in Regina.

We need civic leadership to address this problem of homelessness. I call on all of our councilors to give support to this initiative, commit to funding, and provide a framework for effective action. In caring for others, we ultimately practice a care that lifts us all. We must do what we know is right.

With appreciation to you who represent us at this level of community service. Thank you.

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