



Dear Friends of Fresh Start,

Over the past year, Fresh Start has demonstrated resilience and commitment to achieving our mission of “providing a hope and a future” for families in our community. This commitment has led to several changes throughout 2018, which we believe will have a large and positive impact on the success of our organization and our ability to serve the community of St. Thomas. This letter is being sent to you to outline a further change in some of the Fresh Start programming. For the last two years, Fresh Start Support Services has been running two programs at two locations: Fresh Start Maternity Supports in St Thomas and The Family Central Apartments in Aylmer. Fresh Start Maternity Supports works to provide support to pregnant and parenting women and their children by providing safe housing while the residents work on parenting skills and other life skills. Family Central Apartments works to provide support by creating an intentional neighbourhood with neighbours that care and support one another. Both programs provide staff that mentor, coach, and support the residents as they develop life skills, parenting skills, employment skills, and education skills.

The Family Central Apartments program came under the Fresh Start ‘umbrella’ on a trial basis in 2016 when Dave and Mary Thiessen (the owners of The Family Central building), Albert Loewen, and Carroll Wiebe approached Lori Fitzgerald, then Executive Director at Fresh Start Support Services, for guidance in developing a supportive apartments program. Together, they developed the vision for a supportive apartments program that, with the addition of program details like the intentional neighbours and biweekly Hub Nights, resembled the supportive apartments program that is offered at Fresh Start Support Services in St Thomas. Since the doors opened at The Family Central Apartments in 2017, Dave, Mary, Albert, and Carroll have worked with Fresh Start’s board of directors and staff to oversee the development of The Family Central Apartment program.

At this time, both The Family Central Apartments and Fresh Start Support Services feel that The Family Central Apartments program is self-sufficient and no longer in need of mentorship and direction from Fresh Start. As a result, both parties have come to a mutual decision that, beginning March 1, 2019, The Family Central Apartments will be run as an independent organization. This decision will allow both programs to focus solely on their mission and provide the amazing supportive programming to the residents that they serve.

While The Family Central Apartments were under the Fresh Start organization, they were able to receive donations using the Fresh Start charitable number. Donations given to Fresh Start for The Family Central Apartments program were held in trust and spent only by The Family Central Apartments

program. At this time, The Family Central Apartments is working on obtaining a charitable number that will allow them to accept donations directly and issue tax receipts. Any unspent donations previously received by Fresh Start on Family Central Apartment's behalf, will be held in trust until a charitable number has been received and then transferred directly to The Family Central Apartments. Additionally, Fresh Start property and any staff associated with The Family Central Apartments has transitioned to The Family Central Apartments.

The Family Central Apartments and Fresh Start Support Services are both excited about this decision and look forward to working alongside each other to carry out the mission of their organizations. If you have any questions or would like more information about this, please feel free to contact Fresh Start Support Services' executive director, Karen Schouten, by email at director@fsms.ca.

Sincerely yours,

On behalf of Fresh Start Support Services



Carrol Wiebe
Board Chair

On behalf of the Family Central Apartments



Albert Loewen
Family Central Apartments Co-Founder